University of Alberta

# Does the explicit teaching of Spanish apologies improve the accuracy in their production by L2 learners?

by

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**Abstract**

This paper investigates the effect of teaching Spanish apologies explicitly to the English-speaking student. The participants included students from four second-semester classes at a large western Canadian university. After distributing a background questionnaire and conducting a short pre-test, the researcher instructed the treatment lessons. Four different Spanish apologies were presented in a short video clip. The two comparison classes were taught general vocabulary and grammar from the video whereas the experimental classes received contextualized explanations on Spanish apologies. The students wrote and performed role plays at the end of the lesson and then completed a post-test. Forty-five days later, the researcher conducted a delayed post-test on all four groups. The results from the study show that there was a significant short-term benefit from the explicit metapragmatic and metalinguistic discussion. However, there is also evidence to suggest that implicit TL input played a role in the improvement shown by both groups.

## Dedication

Special thanks to Dr. Lam, who gave me the courage to embark on this incredible journey and who answered all of my questions and concerns with the patience of a saint. The ultimate completion of this project would never have been possible without the loving support and words of encouragement given to me by my parents, my sons and especially Chris. Your faith in my abilities continues to amaze me. Life really does begin at forty!

**Table of Contents**


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CHAPTER ONE: | Background | 1 |
| 1.1 | Importance of Pragmatics | 3 |
| 1.2 | Statement of Problem | 7 |
| 1.2.1 | English Apologies | 8 |
| 1.2.2 | Spanish Apologies | 12 |
| 1.2.3 | Limitations of Current Textbooks | 16 |
| 1.3 | Apologies and Classroom Instruction | 18 |
| 1.3.1 | Previous Research on Teaching Pragmatics | 19 |
| 1.3.2 | Research Question | 25 |
| 1.4 | Summary of Chapter | 27 |
| CHAPTER TWO: | Methodology | 29 |
| 2.1 | Participants & Selection Rationale | 29 |
| 2.2 | Treatments | 31 |
| 2.3 | Instruments | 34 |
| 2.4 | Data Analysis Method | 35 |
| CHAPTER THREE: | Data Analysis | 38 |
| 3.1 | Background Questionnaire | 38 |
| 3.2 | Multiple Choice Items | 40 |
| 3.3 | Discourse Completion | 46 |
| 3.3.1 | Discourse Completion Formulaic Apologies | 47 |
| 3.3.2 | Discourse Completion Alternative Apologies | 52 |
| 3.3.3 | Discourse Completion Apology Strategies | 54 |
| 3.4 | Role Plays | 56 |
| 3.5 | Summary of Results | 58 |

CHAPTER FOUR: Discussion of Results ..... 61
4.1 Data Results ..... 61
4.2 Research Limitations ..... 70
4.3 Pedagogical Implications & Future Research ..... 72
4.4 Conclusion ..... 79

REFERENCES ..... 80

Appendix A Background Questionnaire ..... 84
Appendix B Test A ..... 85
Appendix C Test B ..... 88
Appendix D Comparison Group Lesson Plan ..... 91
Appendix E Comparison Group Worksheet ..... 94
Appendix F *Fiesta* Video Transcription ..... 97
Appendix G Experimental Group Worksheet ..... 103
Appendix H Experimental Group Lesson Plan ..... 106

## List of Tables


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Table 1 | Classification of Apology Strategies (Meier, 1998) | 13 |
| Table 2 | Native Speaker Apology Strategies | 14 |
| Table 3 | Spanish Textbook & Dictionary Translations of Apologies | 17 |
| Table 4 | Questionnaire Results - Instructor Beliefs | 20 |
| Table 5 | Questionnaire Results - Classroom Practices | 20 |
| Table 6 | Comparison Groups Average Total Multiple Choice Scores | 41 |
| Table 7 | Experimental Groups Average Total Multiple Choice Scores | 42 |
| Table 8 | Comparison Groups Average Multiple Choice Scores on Apology Items Only | 43 |
| Table 9 | Experimental Groups Average Multiple Choice Scores on Apology Items Only | 43 |
| Table 10 | Single ANOVA Comparison of Post-Test Multiple Choice Apologies | 45 |
| Table 11 | Average Total Discourse Completion Scores | 46 |
| Table 12 | Pre-test Discourse Completion Apology Variety | 50 |
| Table 13 | Post-test Discourse Completion Apology Variety | 50 |
| Table 14 | Delayed Post-test Discourse Completion Apology Variety | 50 |
| Table 15 | Role Play Apologies - Written Version | 56 |

## List of Figures


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Figure 1 | Average Multiple Choice Scores for Both Groups | 42 |
| Figure 2 | Average Scores on Apology Items Only | 44 |
| Figure 3 | Comparison of Post-Test Multiple Choice Apology Items Between Groups | 45 |
| Figure 4 | Discourse Completion Mean Scores | 47 |
| Figure 5 | Pre-Test Discourse Completion Apology Variety | 51 |
| Figure 6 | Post-Test Discourse Completion Apology Variety | 51 |
| Figure 7 | Delayed Post-Test Discourse Completion Apology Variety | 51 |
| Figure 8 | Discourse Completion Task Alternative Apology Expressions. | 53 |

## Chapter One - Background

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of teaching Spanish apologies explicitly to the second language learner. Considering the reality of a typical classroom in which teachers are constrained not only by the relentlessness of time, but also by ever-expanding curricular objectives, we need to question the practicality of explicit pragmatic instruction in the classroom. That is, will the learner's pragmatic competence increase after receiving specific explanations of Spanish apologies and the various contexts in which they are used? Perhaps the subtleties of certain apologetic expressions can be just as easily acquired implicitly through frequent exposure to authentic target language input. An initial comparison of apologies in Spanish to those found in English indicates that there may be some general similarities as to their intended meaning and function, at least at a superficial level. This semantic resemblance may facilitate positive transfer from one language to the other. In fact, if we were to set aside the lexical variation in formulaic Spanish apologies, the translations found in most textbooks are valid and it is true that many times, native speakers apologize in ways which would appear to be parallel interpretations of English apologies. However, since there are fewer formulaic apologies in English, one would expect Spanish second language learners to experience some difficulty in knowing when to use each particular word or phrase.

Clearly, one must first become familiar with the contextualized translations of each expression before fully understanding the intended meaning of Spanish apologies. *Lo siento* literally means "I feel it" and is generally used in more serious situations and to express deep regret. For instance, if one were to express condolences at a funeral or

apologize for hurting someone else's feelings, *lo siento* would be most appropriate. For many Spanish speakers, *disculpa* and *perdón* are more common apologies since they are used in less serious, everyday situations, such as arriving late to class or perhaps jostling a stranger on the bus. It can be translated as "sorry" or "excuse me", depending on the situation. *Con permiso* can only be used in specific contexts in which physical movement is often implied. This phrase literally means "with permission" and may also be loosely translated to mean "excuse me". Although *con permiso* could be translated as "sorry" if you were trying to get by somebody in a crowd, it is most often used as a type of request. For example, you would say *con permiso* to excuse yourself from the dinner table or to interrupt a conversation in order to answer the telephone. Although these translations are relatively simplistic and can certainly vary, depending on regional dialects and individual preference, we are still confronted with the initial problem that English speakers can use "sorry" to express themselves appropriately in many different circumstances while Spanish requires the use of specific expressions depending on the context. As such, we are quickly thrust into the semantic and functional complexity of Spanish apologies.

In order to better understand the potential difficulties encountered by students when learning Spanish apologies, this chapter will provide an overview of previous research on L1 and L2 pragmatics, both in English and Spanish. There will be an initial explanation of some underlying theoretical frameworks necessary for the study of pragmatics. These include the Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1988), the Cooperative Principle Model (Grice, in Jaworski & Coupland, 1999) and Goffman's concept of corrective face-work (ibid). I will also look at some research on Spanish

pragmatics which suggests the possibility of cultural differences and subsequent negative transfer occurring between languages. Some additional insight into the perceived need for explicit pragmatic instruction in the foreign language classroom will be provided through the results from previous research by the author on apologies used by L1 Spanish speakers and teacher beliefs and practices in the L2 classroom. Finally, an extensive study by Pearson (2000) on the effects of teaching Spanish pragmatics will be summarized and discussed, since the resulting data provided much of the impetus for my own research.

### 1.1 Importance of Pragmatics

According to one definition, "[p]ragmatics is the study of the aspects of meaning and language use that are dependent on the speaker, the addressee and other features such as the context of an utterance, some generally observed principles of communication, and the goals of the speaker." (SIL International, 2004). The act that a speaker performs by making an utterance is simply defined as a speech act (ibid). Requests, greetings, insults, complaints, threats, promises and apologies are all examples of speech acts and since they naturally involve contextualized meaning, there is usually more implied than simple semantics would suggest. As a result, in order to make her[1] intentions understood in an appropriate and acceptable manner, the speaker should be relatively proficient in her language abilities and it is quite likely that the listener needs to share a similar background, both linguistically and culturally.

[1] For purposes of conciseness, the female pronouns "she" or "her" will be used in this paper when referring to any unspecified person.

These sociolinguistic implications have led many researchers to investigate pragmatic proficiency. Unfortunately, the majority of these studies have focused on L1 and L2 English speakers (e.g. Olshtain, 1991; Meier, 1998; Ruzickova, 1998), the results of which have been generalized to other languages. Considering the socially-sensitive nature of pragmatics, it seems counterintuitive, and perhaps a little presumptuous, to assume the production and interpretation of the various speech acts to be entirely homogeneous. As such, there should probably be greater awareness and sensitivity by second language instructors to the potential for both positive and negative transfer of L1 pragmatics during the process of L2 acquisition.

Considering the fact that pragmatics involves the context in which language is used and speech acts are the performance of action through language, we can safely assume that, in every language, there are specific statements which function as necessary tools for socially acceptable behaviour. In English, for example, "I'm sorry" usually indicates acknowledgement and subsequent regret for some kind of damage inflicted by the speaker. This would then be followed by an appropriate response by the addressee (e.g. *don't worry about it* or *that's okay*). In this way, a socially acceptable verbal exchange is performed by both speakers. Perhaps it is precisely because of this practical communicative function that pragmatics has been purported as an essential aspect of language acquisition by many second language acquisition (SLA) researchers (e.g. Canale & Swain, 1980). Knowing what, when and how to say something ultimately defines the parameters of communicative interaction between two or more speakers in any given context. Furthermore, the manner in which we speak is often socio-culturally constructed. This unique feature of pragmatics is of special significance to second

language (L2) learners and their instructors. For L2 students, the successful comprehension and production of pragmatic conventions, such as speech acts, is probably the final and most elusive step to achieving fluency. We only need to recall how often our parents reminded us of the importance of politeness to realize that pragmatics can be a challenge, even when learning our first language. As for myself, a language learner who was fortunate enough to be immersed in the Spanish language for an extended period of time, I often committed embarrassing faux pas in the beginning stages of L2 acquisition when conversing with native speakers. Thus, as teachers, we shouldn't be surprised when our students encounter difficulties while trying to learn and understand the meaning and usage of certain expressions in the target language. On the other hand, this should not imply that pragmatic acquisition is an impossible feat for learners within a typical classroom environment. For the purposes of this study, the problem of how to introduce students to pragmatics in a practical and meaningful way will be approached from the perspective of classroom instruction, since that is where there is often very limited authentic input and as a result, the subtleties of pragmatics are probably least experienced or understood. At the very least, students should be made aware of how, when and with whom various formulaic expressions should be used. In addition, teachers can clarify socio-cultural distinctions with regards to turn-taking rules and politeness in various types of conversations.

During the last two decades, there has been much attention paid to pragmatics as it pertains to the English language and L2 speakers. Canale and Swain (1980) subdivided the second language learning process into three components: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. With communicative competence as their

primary focus, the researchers suggested the benefits of explicit instruction on "sociocultural rules, discourse rules and communication strategies considered relevant to learners' communication needs" (ibid, p.36). Canale and Swain also address the issue of linguistic transfer in that they recommend that the learner analyze the similarities and differences between rules of contextual appropriateness in both the foreign language and her native language. This strategy should increase the learner's metapragmatic awareness and therefore improve her ability to recognize the importance of pragmatics. Three years later, Canale (1983) added "discourse competence" to his framework which recognizes the ability "to combine and interpret meanings and forms". This kind of competence would allow the learner to express herself equally well in formal and informal conversations. Since pragmatics is primarily concerned with the meaning and interpretation of language in certain contexts, this instructional model addresses the issue of pragmatics in the classroom in both a comprehensive and practical manner.

The theory of communicative competence, as proposed by Canale and Swain over a quarter century ago, certainly remains alive and well here in Canadian second language classrooms. In fact, the framework for the Alberta High School Spanish curriculum (Alberta Education, p.2) is divided into four categories: applications, language competence, global citizenship and strategies. Except perhaps for "global citizenship", it appears to be based on Canale and Swain's original design and in fact, the term "communicative competence" is used frequently throughout the curriculum guide. Although pragmatics is not mentioned as such, this same guide clearly encourages pragmatic competence from primary school through grade 12 in the general outcome for language competence defined as "applying knowledge of the sociocultural context"

(Alberta Education, p.21). The guidelines for Spanish 10, 20 and 30 (senior high) specifically outline the use of "basic politeness conventions", "recognition of impolite verbal behaviour" and "common social conventions in written and oral texts" (ibid). The importance of teaching pragmatics in the classroom is further supported by the results of a survey I conducted previously which indicated a general agreement by educators that pragmatics is an essential component of all languages (see Section 1.3.1). However, the same survey revealed little consensus on how to teach it effectively in the L2 classroom. In fact, it could well be that, instead of offering explicit pragmatic instruction teachers should be playing the role of classroom facilitator through the inclusion of abundant TL input, in both written and oral forms. Without extensive exposure to the target language in an authentic context, foreign language students may forever struggle with the particular contextualized intentionality inherent in many common utterances. In addition, this same difficulty often results in misunderstandings among speakers possessing minimal pragmatic skills, which could ultimately lead to increased learner reluctance and lack of motivation to achieve communicative competence in the L2.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Even though many researchers and educators seem to agree that an essential aspect of L2 communicative competence is the appropriate use of apologies and other speech acts, there are clearly some hurdles to surmount when teaching Spanish apologies to the English speaker. First of all, the motivation for *saving face* in a Spanish-speaking culture appears to be somewhat different from English. Since apologies are primarily concerned with the face-saving concept, certain sociocultural standards in Spanish may

be of significant importance to the English-speaking student. There are also varying degrees of formality in Spanish which may or may not exist in English. The perceived roles of the speaker and addressee ultimately determine the use of certain formulaic phrases or the addition of alternative apologetic expressions. In addition, there are more formulaic apologies in Spanish than in English and most of these apologies are contextually specific. Unfortunately, a review of current textbooks does not reveal a general consensus on the best English translation for many Spanish apologies and in some cases, certain expressions are left out entirely. This could result in the learner relying on only one expression and then using it for every situation, just as "sorry" would be used in English or, if the various apologies are introduced but not explained sufficiently, the learner may become confused and apologize inappropriately. Finally, there do not appear to be any obvious interlanguage pragmatic norms upon which the L2 learner can depend. The sociocultural subtleties of Spanish apologies must therefore be described in detail by the instructor to the student and complemented by ample TL input and situational practice in order to fully attain pragmatic competence and confidence. Teachers should also make students more aware of their L1 pragmatics so that they can understand more fully the complex nature of expressing themselves appropriately in any given situation.

### 1.2.1 English Apologies

Probably the main reason that the Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) has been used so frequently by researchers studying interlanguage pragmatics is that it draws on various perspectives of human communication in different languages. Brown

and Levinson refer to Grice's Cooperative Principle model (in Jaworski & Coupland, 1999, p.78), which defines the four maxims normally followed by speakers in successful verbal interaction: quality, quantity, relation and manner. Since politeness is primarily concerned with the concept of how people perceive others, it naturally becomes one of the ways in which these maxims are violated. With regards to apologies specifically, Levinson (1987) classifies them as speech acts that directly damage a person's positive self-image or *face*.

According to Goffman (in Jaworski & Coupland, 1999, p.306), we all live in a world which necessarily involves face-to-face social contact. Furthermore, we continually express our view of a particular situation and evaluate ourselves and other people through verbal and non-verbal communication. This socially determined role that everyone seems to play, albeit unwittingly, also includes the concept of face, or the way in which we portray ourselves to others. Goffman (ibid) mentions the term "face-work", referring to the actions we must take in order to save face. If, for any reason our face is threatened, a subsequent corrective process of face-work usually follows and often includes such ritualistic actions as challenging, offering, acceptance and gratitude. Within the framework of this corrective process we find the apology and its various manifestations ranging from indignant justifications to frantic pleas for forgiveness.

In that apologies, in any language, are essentially assurances by the speaker that the listener's negative face be redressed, they are therefore a negative politeness strategy (in Jaworski & Coupland, 1999, p.328). Negative politeness strategies tend to show more deference to the listener and involve an attempt not to cause an imposition. An example might be "I'm so sorry to bother you but do you think you could pass the salt?", where

the speaker apologizes for bothering the listener. Positive politeness strategies occur when the speaker wants to express solidarity with the listener by emphasizing that they share a common goal and that the speaker had good intentions but was thwarted by external factors outside her control. An English apology employing a positive politeness strategy might be, "I'm sorry I arrived late for work, the bus was late!". Generally speaking, English apologies are expressed most frequently through formulaic expressions (e.g. "sorry"). However, there also seems to be a relationship between the severity of offenses and the avoidance of routine phrases (Meier, 1998, p.216). For example, when the negative consequences of a particular action are perceived to be minimal, speakers revert to formulaic apologies whereas more serious transgressions are often accompanied or completely replaced by alternative expressions of regret. There also seems to be a natural and somewhat universal (with only slight regional variation) categorization of English apology strategies with respect to the type of offense, formality of the situation and the method of interaction (verbal or written).

Meier (1988) lists the routine formulae ("sorry") as the most commonly occurring strategy, followed closely by emotives ("oh no!"). Those expressions indicating no harm done ("I hope everyone's okay"), redress ("let me reimburse you") and forbearance ("I'll never do that again") follow the first two strategies in decreasing levels of frequency (p.218). Interestingly, in the results of one of Meier's studies (ibid, p.219), there appears to be little, if any, connection between the severity of offense and the number or sequence of these particular strategies. This directly contradicts previous studies that claim a distinct preference by the speaker to employ strategies other than routine formulae when the offense is perceived as quite serious (ibid). Another contentious issue in the study of

apologies is the potential effect of gender difference. Some researchers (Gonzales et al, in Meier, 1998, p.219) claim that women are more explicitly verbose and emotional in their attempts to apologize. Others also propose that women try to save face by blaming internal factors, such as lack of ability, whereas men attribute their failure to external factors (Snyder et al, in Meier, 1998, p.219). Nonetheless, apart from a notable increased use of intensifiers by women, most studies reveal little distinction between the various apology strategies used by English-speaking men and women.

The issue of speaker-hearer relationship is also somewhat unclear when researching apologies. According to Meier (1998, p.219), there are contradicting reports on the effect of this relationship with respect to the production of more or less elaborate apologies by L1 and L2 English speakers. Initially, Meier presents the natural assumption that the more familiar the relationship is, the more routine the apology will be (p.219). However, Meier also discusses contradicting data which suggest that when friends apologize to each other, they tend to take more responsibility and negotiate the apology in more detail (ibid). This greater use of strategies correlated to the closeness of interlocutor relationship is what some refer to as the "bulge" theory (Wolfson, in Meier, 1998, p.220). This theory proposes that English speakers use more elaborate apology strategies with those who have a moderately close relationship to them (e.g. a friend). Alternatively, the closer and more distant relationships (e.g. family and strangers) receive the lowest number of apologies. The final, and perhaps the most clearly defined, role of interlocutor relationship in using certain apology strategies is that of socially-constructed boundaries of formality. Trosborg (in Meier, 1998, p.220) found that English speakers tend to apologize more to authority figures and prefer the strategy of accepting

responsibility, rather than providing justification for their actions. This pattern was even present in what would otherwise be considered low-level offenses. Studies also show that emotive-like intensifiers like "very" or "really" are not used as often when we apologize to someone who maintains a position of power or dominance (Gonzales et al, in Meier, 1998, p.221).

Although it may be argued that apologies are highly interactional and of equal interest to both participants involved, Meier adheres strictly to the previously mentioned description of face-work and further maintains that apologies are motivated primarily by the speaker's intention to save her own face (1998, p.221). However, given that the aforementioned studies were all conducted by Western European or North American researchers, I suspect that the issue of negative politeness and self-serving motivation is based on fundamentally biased cultural and social assumptions. As such, it is quite possible that the pragmatic function of apologies varies according to the language and/or region of interest.

### 1.2.2 Spanish Apologies

Although there appear to be some regional variations with respect to the use of certain apologies, for purposes of clarity, the present study will employ the definitions of *lo siento, disculpa, perdón* and *con permiso* as described previously (see pp.1 - 2). One can quite easily apply these apologies, along with alternative apology expressions to the same classifications of *routine formulae, emotives, no harm done, redress* and *forbearance,* as described by Meier (1998, p.218) (see Table 1).

**Table 1**
Classification of Apology Strategies (Meier, 1998) with Spanish Translations

| *Apology Classification* | *English Examples* | *Sample Spanish Translations* |
|---|---|---|
| Routine Formulae | sorry | disculpa, lo siento, perdón, con permiso |
| Emotives | oh no! | ¡ay no! ¡Dios mio! |
| No Harm Done | at least nobody got hurt | por lo menos todos están bien |
| Redress | I'll pay you back for that | te pagaré por eso |
| Forbearance | I promise to never do it again | te prometo de no hacerlo de nuevo |

Even though the apology strategies used in English appear to have direct Spanish equivalents, there are some fundamental differences in how various apologies are expressed by Spanish and English speakers. The results from Garcia's study (in Marquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005) show a strong preference by her Spanish-speaking American subjects for negative politeness strategies in which they were quite "deferential and self-effacing". The Hispano-Americans also expected some kind of redress or compensation by the speaker and were offended when this did not occur. On the other hand, it was found that Venezuelan speakers used positive politeness strategies almost exclusively. Cuban speakers were found to use both negative and positive politeness strategies, although still using the positive strategies more frequently (Ruzickova, 1998; Marquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005). Marquez Reiter (2005) also found that Spanish speakers from Chile, Spain and Uruguay preferred the non-intensified hearer-orientated apologies such as *disculpa* or *perdón*. This may indicate less of a need to redress the interlocutor's negative face (Marquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005).

The results of my own research show an apparent prevalence of non-formulaic apologies in more formal situations. Six native Spanish speakers - three women and one

man from Mexico, one woman from Spain, and one woman from Costa Rica - were asked to respond orally to five different situations in which various apologies were elicited. Each participant was asked to act out five different scenarios either as a monologue or in conversation with another participant or the researcher herself. The actual content of the role plays was left completely to the creativity of each individual. By the length of each transcription, it is obvious that all of the participants immersed themselves quite easily into each situation and acted their parts in a seemingly spontaneous manner. It was also decided to reveal the objectives of this study to the participants at the outset, in the hope that more tokens would be elicited and upon considering the distinct function of each particular apology, this advance knowledge probably didn't significantly alter or bias the subjects' selection of certain words or phrases. [2]

**Table 2**
Native Spanish Speaker Apology Strategies

| Participant | Disculpa | Lo siento | Perdón | Con permiso | Alternative Strategies | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 – Mexico | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 25 | **39** |
| 2 - Mexico | 7 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 20 | **30** |
| 3 – Costa Rica | 14 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 21 | **36** |
| 4 – Mexico | 20 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 45 | **73** |
| 5 - Mexico | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 24 | **38** |
| 6 - Spain | 10 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 17 | **45** |
| **Total tokens per apology type** | **65** | **20** | **9** | **15** | **152** | **261** |

[2] This study involved four participants acting out their role plays with a partner, while the other two performed it as a monologue. This lack of methodological consistency may have affected the results in that the reactions of the interlocutor could have influenced the speaker's use of apologies and other expressions of regret. For instance, neither of the two speakers who performed alone said "con permiso" at all. This might be simply because they didn't actually perceive the physical need to move past another person. These two speakers also used fewer alternative or additional expressions of apology than the other four.

The subsequent transcriptions from this study revealed a marked preference by the subjects to employ alternative apology strategies rather than the formulaic expressions of *disculpa, lo siento, perdón* and *con permiso* (see Table 2). As suggested by Trosborg (in Meier, 1998, p.220), this may have been due to the fact that four of the five situations involved the speaker apologizing to a relative stranger or someone of authority (employer, bus driver and neighbour). However, the Spanish speakers in this particular study preferred to use justifications for their actions, rather than accept responsibility. In this respect, the results of my research on L1 Spanish apologies would appear to contradict Trosborg's findings (ibid).

As previously mentioned, the results from this study indicate some distinct similarities and differences between pragmatic discourse in both English and Spanish. The Spanish speakers clearly preferred to use positive politeness strategies in almost every instance, regardless of whom they were addressing. Other studies (Meier, 1998) suggest that the formality of the context as well as the nature of the relationship between the two speakers influence the choice of various expressions of apology, especially with regards to the use of non-formulaic expressions. However, there appears to be greater reluctance among the subjects of my study to accept responsibility for their *loss of face*. One must also bear in mind that the sample size from this particular study is quite limited and as such the results should be interpreted with caution. More participants representing an even gender split and greater regional variation would probably allow for a more accurate description of corrective face work in Spanish. In any event, it seems quite probable that the myriad of explicit and implicit expressions and strategies involved in the study of apologies is not necessarily global in nature and, in fact, the process of

saving face is not only contextually sensitive, but culturally and linguistically specific. For that reason, a language learner might experience some difficulty when attempting to apply her L1 pragmatic knowledge to the L2, especially when confronted with the variety of apologetic expressions used in Spanish (see Table 1). With respect to the experimental lesson used for the present study, the knowledge of this pragmatic complexity confirms the necessity for explicit explanations and numerous examples of the various contexts in which apologies are expressed. The data analysis must account not only for accuracy in usage but also for the number and variety of apologies since a single lesson will surely not provide sufficient input and practice for the students to achieve full competence in the understanding and usage of Spanish apologies.

### 1.2.3 Limitations of Current Textbooks

Upon reviewing several textbooks as well as The Concise Oxford Spanish Dictionary (1998), there is considerable variation in the interpretation of Spanish apologies (see Table 2). For instance, apologies such as *disculpa*, *perdón* and non-formulaic expressions (Meier, 1998), as described in Table 1 (see section 1.2.2), are hardly mentioned, even though the study conducted by the author suggests that formulaic apologies rarely stand alone, but rather they are most frequently accompanied or even replaced by various alternatives. Interestingly, all of these texts (except the dictionary) translate *lo siento* as "to be sorry" whereas *disculpa* is described as an "excuse". Furthermore, there is no mention by any of the textbooks as to the various other apologetic utterances used so frequently in the previously mentioned study (see Table 2). Upon examination of the summary of definitions found in Table 3, it is clear that the

contextual factors affecting the expression of certain apologies in Spanish are not explained at all and I surmise that these simplistic translations could well encourage negative transfer from the students' linguistic and pragmatic knowledge of English apologies.

**Table 3**
Spanish Textbook and Dictionary Translations of Apologies

| | ***Lo siento Sentir*** | ***Disculpe Disculpar(se)*** | ***Perdón, Mil Perdones*** | ***Con Permiso*** | ***Other*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Oxford Spanish Dictionary*** | grieved, sad | apologetic, repentant | apologetic, repentant | Excuse me | "¿cómo?" asking person to repeat |
| ***Interacciones*** | to be sorry, regret, feel | to excuse | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| ***Dicho y Hecho*** | sorry | n/a | pardon me, excuse me | pardon me, excuse me | n/a |
| ***Beginning Spanish*** | I'm sorry, to be sorry | To apologize or excuse me | excuse me, to forgive | excuse me | n/a |
| ***Panorama*** | I'm sorry, to feel, to be sorry, regret | to excuse | I'm so sorry, excuse me, pardon me | excuse me, pardon me | n/a |
| ***Viva*** | to feel, be sorry, regret, I'm sorry, | excuse | I'm so sorry, excuse me, pardon me | excuse me, pardon me | n/a |
| ***Destinos*** | to feel, to regret, to feel sorry about, I'm sorry | To excuse, make excuses for, | to pardon, pardon me, excuse me | may I pass by | |
| ***Enfoques*** | n/a | to excuse, apologize, to apologize, pardon me, excuse me | n/a | n/a | n/a |

One can see that most of these definitions translate *disculpa* as "excuse me" which would mean that there are only specific instances in English where this would be considered an appropriate apology. The textbook glossaries provide little, if any differentiation between *disculpa* and *con permiso*, even though they often have very different pragmatic functions. The only definition that seems to clarify this distinction is from *Destinos*, in which actual physical movement is used to describe *con permiso*. Furthermore, certain textbooks omit seemingly common apologies, and there does not appear to be much explanation for the similarities and differences between *lo siento* and *disculpa*. This apparent paucity of clear and contextualized translations for apologies does nothing to assist instructors in providing pragmatic explanations and may contribute to increased confusion by the L2 learner.

### 1.3 Apologies and Classroom Instruction

Due to the contextual implications and obvious social significance of expressing apologies in an appropriate fashion, L2 instructors need to make an effort to provide their students with some exposure to common apologies and detailed explanations as to how they are most frequently used by native speakers. In order to establish a certain level of pragmatic automaticity, this kind of instruction might include numerous opportunities for natural conversations in various situations. To this end, video materials and role plays would be particularly useful since they provide both visual and verbal cues and language learners are made more aware of the contextual significance implied through the various expressions. Although there is limited data on the subject of teaching pragmatics in the

classroom, there are a few studies which appear to support my theory of authentic TL exposure, explicit instruction and meaningful practice.

### 1.3.1 Previous Research on Teaching Pragmatics

Pragmatics has already been described as strongly dependant on socio-cultural norms (Kasper & Rose, 2002) and as such, should probably be an integral part of the communicative and culturally-centred classroom. The question of how pragmatics can be presented effectively to foreign language students and whether or not it is closely connected to culture in the minds of instructors was addressed in a preliminary study by the author. In this study, twenty-three foreign language instructors at a large western Canadian university offered input on educational beliefs and practices in the classroom. Fourteen of the subjects were teaching languages other than their own and the rest were native speakers. They were first asked general questions detailing their unique language background and educational training. The instructors then completed a questionnaire in which they expressed their opinion (ranging on the Likert scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) on twenty-eight statements concerning typical L2 language instruction and personal beliefs about teaching (see Tables 4 & 5).

**Table 4**
Questionnaire Results – Instructor Beliefs

| Statement | NS Instructor % Agree | NNS Instructor % Agree |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Communication is key to L2 learning. | 100% (9/9) | 100% (14/14) |
| 2. Culture is an essential component of L2 instruction. | 100% (9/9) | 93% (13/14) |
| 3. Grammar is the most important aspect of L2 learning | 11% (1/9) | 21% (3/14) |
| 4. The best way to learn apologies/requests is by memorization | 44% (4/9) | 29% (4/14) |
| 5. Course videos are not always culturally accurate/interesting | 56% (5/9) | 93% (13/14) |
| 6. My students are excited to learn about new cultures | 78% (7/9) | 71% (10/14) |
| 7. TL literature should be part of the curriculum | 67% (6/9) | 79% (11/14) |

Although the sample size was small, the data from this survey still revealed some interesting similarities and differences concerning the pedagogical beliefs and practices of native and non-native speaking instructors. Most of the participants claimed to incorporate authentic texts into their lessons and encouraged frequent target language use and exposure by the students (see Table 5).

**Table 5**
Questionnaire Results – Classroom Practices

| Statement | NS Instructor % Agree | NNS Instructor % Agree |
|---|---|---|
| 1. I speak the target language most of the time when teaching | 89% (8/9) | 100% (14/14) |
| 2. I frequently show cultural films to the students | 11% (1/9) | 21% (3/14) |
| 3. I often bring newspapers, magazines, etc. into the classroom | 89% (8/9) | 93% (13/14) |
| 4. I follow very closely a required textbook in lesson planning | 44% (4/9) | 64% (9/14) |
| 5. I teach students how to apologize/make requests in the L2 | 67% (6/9) | 100% (14/14) |
| 6. I spend at least 50% of class time teaching grammar | 44% (4/9) | 36% (5/14) |
| 7. I often encourage my students to seek outside TL contact | 78% (7/9) | 86% (12/14) |
| 8. I never have enough time to teach non-required material | 0% (0/0) | 29% (4/14) |

Many instructors appeared to recognize the importance of culture in the classroom but there was also some discrepancy between their beliefs and actual practice. It appears that the majority felt that culture was essential to L2 learning (#2, Table 4) but then, several instructors admitted to spending a large portion of class time on grammar and not having much time left over for non-required material (#8, Table 5). Nonetheless, there were still many who emphasized cultural activities and tasks in spite of admitted external pressures, such as time constraints and curriculum guidelines, all of which undoubtedly restrict the amount of actual time spent teaching any non-grammatical aspect of language. Additional relevance of these results to the present study is apparent in one particular statement about teaching apologies and requests (see Table 5, #5) to their students. All of the non-native instructors claimed to teach these skills to their students whereas only a third of the native speakers found it a topic of concern. However, the possible differences between native and non-native speaking second-language instructors would have to be further investigated with a much greater number of participants in order to make any reasonable conclusions regarding any significant impact it may have in the classroom.

Because of the social and interactive nature of pragmatics, many language teachers would probably agree that, regardless of the method by which pragmatics skills are taught, it should always include meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning. Pragmatics cannot be fully understood without using and hearing the various expressions within their appropriate and authentic contexts. The current movement by many educators and policy-makers towards content-based and communicative learning is reassuring and my own research suggests that this particular trend is becoming

increasingly accepted, even by instructors who have received minimal pedagogical training. However, there also seems to be some divergence between the focus on pragmatics and culture by those who are teaching their mother tongue and those of us who have claimed another language as our own. It could be that some non-native speakers are more sensitive to the intricacies of L2 pragmatics and the predicaments that often arise from acts of sociolinguistic ineptitude.

Even though there are undoubtedly many curriculum requirements and stringent guidelines, as regulated by the administration, most teachers in my study appeared to be sensitive to current pedagogical trends, subscribing to the communicative approach in theory. This may be simply because that is what the instructors are told by their program coordinators. However, there is also an occasional disconnect between personal beliefs and actual practice. This could indicate a lack of training which impedes the successful application of theory to practice and as a result, some language teachers fall back on a more grammar-focused approach, either relying heavily on the textbook or drawing from their own experiences when learning the L2. Considering the time limitations within the classroom, one might surmise that such a pronounced emphasis on grammar would quite likely preclude the likelihood of much exposure to the target language in various authentic contexts, thus limiting the students' understanding of L2 pragmatics.

Presently there is limited data showing any measurable effects of pragmatic instruction. This could be due to the fact that pragmatic competence is a skill which is acquired by the learner over a long period of time. It is also difficult to measure pragmatic competence in an efficient manner because the most effective method is through the recording and analysis of spontaneous discourse in a variety of authentic

situations. I found only one related study (present study excluded) and it shows that explicit instruction increased proficiency and variation in formulaic expressions such as apologies (Pearson, 2001). In this study, Pearson investigated the effect of metapragmatic discussion and pragmatic instruction on the students' acquisition of various Spanish speech acts. The participants consisted of 169 second-semester Spanish students at an American university. There were three groups of students involved in Pearson's study which included one 30-minute lesson for each speech act; thanking, apologizing, commands and polite requests. One group had metapragmatic discussion and role plays as well as exposure to the various expressions; the other only received exposure and role play practice, while the third group received no exposure at all to any of the speech acts. The experimental groups were exposed to pragmatics through segments from the instructional video, *Destinos*. The lessons were taught by their own teachers (not the researcher) and they were given scripts to follow for each lesson. During the metapragmatic discussion, the instructors drew the students' attention to the various apologies heard in the video and then asked them to list various statements of regret or requests for forgiveness (p.89). The pragmatic instruction included the video segment and role play practice by the students. The data for this study were collected through written and oral tests given before and after the treatment lesson. The results from this study are particularly relevant to the present research because Pearson found that the positive effects of metapragmatic discussion, which focused their attention on strategies to realize the various speech acts, were apparent only in the students' use of intensifiers and appropriate apologies. There was no significant increase in their use of other speech acts such as directives, requests or expressions of gratitude. Pearson

attributed the general pragmatic improvement by all three groups on the delayed post-test (delivered six months later) to an overall increase in their knowledge of Spanish. As for the effect of explicit pragmatic instruction, which included the video and role play practice, she concluded that there was a significant increase in the use of intensifiers and softeners by the students when apologizing but that there was no significant increase in the more complex strategies such as making requests. Pearson suggests that linguistic competence may be closely linked to the acquisition of more complex speech acts. She also proposes that the various elements of pragmatics need to be learned in stages, much like grammar or any other aspect of language, in order for the learner to internalize them effectively. Finally, Pearson appears to support the old adage of "practice makes perfect" as she outlines the complicated process of learning second language pragmatics and the usefulness of frequent exposure and practice.

Considering all of the previously mentioned obstacles, as well as the lack of empirical research on the effects of explicit pragmatic instruction, the feasibility of how and if apologies can be taught in a formal learning environment obviously becomes a legitimate concern in the field of second language education. Since pragmatics involves the expression and interpretation of meaning, one would presume that there should be as much authentic dialogue as possible from which students can view the language in action and negotiate and approximate its meaning (Graman, 1988). This humanization of the classroom can be accomplished through various means, such as showing films and providing newspapers, magazines, stories and other forms of target language media to the students.

### 1.3.2 Research Question

A cursory look at popular textbooks seems to indicate that apologies are somewhat difficult to translate from English to Spanish and ultimately this absence of positive transfer may increase the learner's difficulty in fully grasping their subtle complexities. The Noticing Hypothesis, as proposed by Richard Schmidt (1987), addresses the possible role of implicit and explicit instruction in learning L2 pragmatics. Schmidt proposes that learners learn best from what they "notice" in the instructional process. In other words, language learners must be consciously aware and attentive in order to learn most effectively. This idea contradicts Krashen's theory (1983), which claims that most of the language we "acquire" is achieved at a subconscious level, much like a child learning her first language. Schmidt, however, encourages the use of explicit instructional techniques and task-based interactive negotiation between students in order to draw their attention to particular features of the target language, including pragmatics. By applying this model, one would assume that, in addition to frequent TL exposure, students will acquire Spanish apologies more effectively when the instructor draws their attention explicitly to the different forms as well as the contextual factors which often affect their usage in everyday speech. Although Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (ibid) does not necessarily demand explicit instruction, the approach used in the present study includes detailed explanations by the instructor in an effort to elicit a greater understanding of Spanish apologies than that which is achieved through TL exposure alone. What the students notice in the video will be enhanced by a metapragmatic discussion on apologies and a description of specific contextual examples which are then reinforced through interactive activities. Even if a student has had no previous immersion experience in the Spanish

language, I hypothesize that it is quite possible that she will attain a greater degree of proficiency in the understanding and use of apologies if exposed to them through this combination of authentic media, explicit instruction by the teacher and interactive task-based activities.

Given the previous information on pragmatics and its role in the second language classroom, the goal of the present study is to answer the following question:

> Does the explicit teaching of Spanish apologies improve the accuracy in their production by English native speakers?

One group of learners is taught different Spanish apologies as heard in a short video clip. The context in which they are used is explained in detail by the researcher and then the students practice what they have learned by writing and performing interactive role plays. The data collected from this experimental group is then compared to a comparison group which also views the video but receives no explicit instruction on apologies; rather theirs is simply a lesson including thematic vocabulary and grammar points from the video. Other information, such as the effect of long-term exposure in a target language environment, will also be discussed in the analysis of results. In the end, it is hypothesized that the explicitly instructed experimental group will exhibit greater written and oral competence in their expression of apologies. In other words, the researcher's detailed explanations of different apologies and how they are used by native Spanish speakers will have a positive effect on the English-speaking learner's understanding and use of apologies in the target language.

### 1.4. Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, the general field of pragmatics, the fundamental concepts of politeness and face-saving acts in both English and Spanish and more importantly, the possible effects of explicit pragmatic instruction have been explored. Pearson's study shows that students benefited only slightly from explicit pragmatic instruction, specifically in their use of apologies. However, there is a noticeable scarcity of data on the effects of explicit instruction to L2 learners and there also seems to be a reluctance or lack of awareness by language instructors to incorporate pragmatics into their lessons. This may indicate that more research needs to be conducted before deriving any conclusions about pragmatics in the classroom.

Arguably, there are many teachers who speak the target language consistently in the classroom and this would likely expose the students to a greater variety of pragmatic expressions uttered in a naturalistic context. Although frequent TL input would certainly be a mitigating factor for L2 students, it does not, in any way, guarantee successful pragmatic acquisition. According to Schmidt (in Kasper & Rose 2002), "pragmatic functions and relevant contextual factors are often not salient to learners and therefore not likely to be noticed despite prolonged exposure".

Finally, the daily social contact in which most of us are involved requires a subconscious sensitivity to cultural norms and for that reason one cannot help but wonder if this is a skill which can be taught in the classroom or if language learners can only achieve pragmatic awareness and eventual competence after living in the L2 environment for a significant amount of time. On the other hand, pragmatics may simply be another component of L2 learning which, after being taught explicitly by the instructor, must then

be practiced frequently by the students in order to achieve full understanding and eventual automaticity. The latter approach to learning pragmatics provides the foundation for the present study on teaching Spanish apologies.

## Chapter 2 – Methodology

Analyzing learner production of specific speech acts like apologies presents a nearly impossible task to the researcher. Recognizing the obvious impracticalities involved in recording hours of spontaneous conversation between speakers, one is compelled to elicit data through other more efficient methods such as role plays, acceptability judgement tasks and discourse-completion tests, even though these methods lack a certain authenticity (Meier, 1998). In the present study, the data were collected through a background questionnaire, multiple choice and open-ended discourse completion tests as well as written and video-taped role plays. On the first day, the students spent approximately 30 minutes of regular class time completing the questionnaire and doing a pre-test. The next day, the researcher returned to each class and taught a 70-minute lesson during which a short video about a birthday party was viewed twice and the students completed various tasks, including a role play. The post-test was conducted during the final ten minutes of each class. Forty-five days later, the researcher conducted the delayed post-test which took another 10-15 minutes to complete. This chapter will describe the participants, the method of treatment used for each group and the various instruments used for data collection. The different methods of data and discourse analysis will also be outlined.

### 2.1 Participants & Selection Rationale

Fifty-three students from four different classes participated in this study. All the students were enrolled in the second semester of a first-year Spanish language course at a large western Canadian university. The classes chosen for the treatment lessons were 80

minutes in length. The first class started at 8:00 A.M. and on the first day, when the background questionnaires and pre-tests were administered, there were only eleven students in attendance. The second class began at 9:30 A.M. and had twenty-one participants while the third had twenty-four students and started at 11:00 A.M. The last class had sixteen students and was at 5:00 P.M. in the afternoon. Each class was taught by a different instructor, of which only one (from the first class) was a native Spanish speaker. The first two classes of the day were chosen randomly as the comparison groups and the last two were the experimental groups. The students and the instructors were unaware of the group to which they had been assigned. If a student was absent for any one of the three tests, her results were eliminated from the statistical analysis of the multiple choice section. However, in order to obtain as much information as possible about the variety and accuracy of apologies provided by the students within a more creative context, all of the data from the discourse completion and role plays were analyzed and discussed.

There were several reasons for deciding to collect data from first-year Spanish students in their second semester. First, pragmatics is rarely presented in the first year which means that the subjects had little, if any, background knowledge of what would be covered in the treatment lesson. In addition, the students would be at an adequate linguistic level by this point to understand the general language needed for the video and tests. Finally, the first-year students were already accustomed to a task-based learning approach in the classroom, which lent itself well to the goals of the treatment lesson.

**2.2 Treatments**

The two comparison groups were taught a typical task-based lesson starting with a one minute introduction to the topic of parties and celebrations, which was part of the regular course syllabus (see Appendix D). The students were given a worksheet and they were instructed to follow along and complete it as required (see Appendix E). The participants then completed a five minute pre-task activity by themselves or with a partner in which they brainstormed about three Spanish words or phrases which are associated with a typical birthday party in Canada and then in Spanish-speaking countries (Part 1, Appendix E). The researcher introduced the video by describing the scene, the characters involved and where each of them was from so the students would be prepared for the different accents. The students were also instructed to listen for specific vocabulary related to birthday parties and answer three questions on their worksheet while viewing the video. These consisted of general comprehension questions about whose birthday it is, how many guests come and what the people do at the party.

The six-minute video used in this study was recorded specifically for the purpose of presenting as many apologies as possible in a time-efficient manner. In order to provide the students with a relatively unbiased Spanish language experience, the video provided a reasonable gender balance as well as some regional dialectical variety. Five people participated in the production of the video: two women from Spain, a man and woman from Mexico and a man from Panama. The native speakers were given a simple *fiesta* scenario and then asked to act out a scene in which as many apologies as possible would be uttered. After approximately fifteen minutes of preparation, the video was recorded as is. The amateur quality of the video was intentional since it was hoped that

the students would find a "home video" more culturally authentic than the typical professional-quality videos normally seen in the classroom. The video was then transcribed and the vocabulary and grammar from the transcription were used to design the lesson and the written tests (see Appendix F).

Immediately after the first viewing of the video, the researcher reinforced a basic understanding of what the students saw and heard by spending about five minutes reviewing the general comprehension questions on the worksheet (Part 2, Section A, Appendix E). The participants viewed the video again while simultaneously completing a fill-in-the-blanks comprehension exercise on their worksheet. All of these items were taken directly from the video. For instance, the students were asked to identify the birthday song that was sung and give the names of the two Spanish girls who came to the party (Part 2, Section B, Appendix E). The researcher then spent about three minutes after the video going over the correct responses to this activity. The next fifteen minutes constituted the actual lesson in which the students in the comparison groups reviewed common vocabulary as well as the past perfective tense (pretérito) which was used frequently throughout the video and something the students needed to review for an upcoming midterm exam (Part 2, Section C, D & E). Upon completion of the worksheet, the researcher gave the students approximately ten minutes to write a role play with a partner (see Appendix E). They were instructed to use vocabulary and expressions heard in the video and used in the worksheet they had just completed. They could also use their textbook as a reference. All of these role plays involved the same situation in which a friend tries to throw a birthday party but everything goes wrong. The scenario was as follows: the invitations were not sent out, the cake was burnt, the guest arrives late and

there are no gifts. There were specific instructions for each of the students to follow when writing their dialogues. The host was to apologize for burning the cake and forgetting to send out the invitations and the guest was to apologize for arriving late. The students were then asked to perform their skits voluntarily in front of the class. Due to time constraints, only two or three role plays were performed in each of the comparison groups. However, all of the written versions were collected before the end of class. Finally, the last ten minutes of the class were reserved for the completion of the post-test.

The sequence of events for the two experimental classes was very similar to the comparison groups although the content of the lesson was focused primarily on the apologies used in the video. The students were also given a worksheet and the first two parts of it were exactly the same as the comparison group's worksheet (see Appendix G). However, after viewing the video for the first time, the researcher quickly drew the students' attention to the apologies used in the video and then asked them to brainstorm about any apology expressions they were already familiar with. There was also a short discussion about the English equivalents for each apology and the various scenarios that might elicit one Spanish apology over another. During the second viewing of the video, the experimental groups were instructed to complete a fill-in-the-blanks exercise in which each item included an apology used in the video (Part 2, Section B, Appendix G). Once again, the researcher reviewed this section quickly, merely viewing the apologies as discrete vocabulary items. There was also a brief look at thematic vocabulary (Section C) before proceeding to the focus of the lesson, which was the use of apologies in Spanish. The researcher spent the next fifteen minutes going through a true/false section

in which seven of the ten statements were specifically focused on Spanish apologies (Part 2, Section D). In this part of the lesson, the different forms and contexts involved when using the different apologies were discussed and explained to the participants. In the next section of the worksheet, the students practiced what they had just learned by completing four different sentences with the most appropriate apology for each. Finally, the experimental groups were given ten minutes at the end of the lesson to write and prepare the same role play as had been already done by the comparison groups and several of these were performed for the benefit of the video camera and the rest of the class. The experimental classes also concluded with a post-test.

Forty-five days later, the researcher returned to each of the participating classes and administered the delayed post-test. There was no additional instruction prior to the test and the whole procedure only took about ten minutes of regular class time. The students in the comparison classes completed their tests on the same day as the experimental classes. The instructors of these four classes had previously agreed not to discuss the topic of apologies during the time after the researcher's lesson and prior to the delayed post-test. Each instructor verified this verbally and by email to the researcher shortly before the delayed post-test.

### 2.3 Instruments

Prior to the treatment lesson, students were asked to describe any previous Spanish courses they may have taken, including high school and conversation classes. The questionnaire also elicited information from the learners with regards to their current daily exposure to the target language and whether they had spent any significant amount

of time in a Spanish-speaking country (see Appendix A). Two different tests were designed for this study, and these were subsequently alternated between the four classes (see Appendix B & C). For example, group 1 (Comparison #1) and group 3 (Experimental #1) wrote Test A as their pre-test and Test B as their post-test. Conversely, group 2 (Comparison #2) and group 4 (Experimental #2) wrote Test B as their pre-test and Test A as their post-test. Due to the significant time lapse between the pre-test and delayed post-test, it was decided that the delayed post-test for each group would be exactly the same as their pre-test. Each written test consisted of twenty multiple choice questions in which students were asked to select, from three choices, the most logical word or phrase to complete a sentence. Ten of these questions focused specifically on apologies. The other multiple choice items were used to provide the students with a pedagogically valuable assessment of vocabulary and grammar skills. At the end of each test, there was an open-ended discourse completion task in which students were asked to respond in written form to four different scenarios in which various apologetic expressions would normally be used, such as expressing condolences at a funeral or apologizing to a teacher for arriving late to class. The students were encouraged to write as little or as much as they liked (see Appendix B). None of the scenarios in the discourse-completion tasks were related to the same theme as that used for the video.

### 2.4 Data analysis method

Although most of the participants had little or no related travel or educational background, there were a few background questionnaires that were isolated and later

reviewed for the possibility of a correlation between pragmatic competence and unusually high exposure to the Spanish language. The pre-tests, post-tests and delayed post-tests were all separated into two sections (multiple choice and discourse completion) and scored individually. The multiple-choice sections of the written tests were given a total score out of twenty and then another score out of ten for the apology items only. Initially, the multiple choice test results from all four groups were analyzed separately but since there were relatively few participants who completed all three tests and there appeared to be no significant difference between the two experimental and the two comparison groups, these were eventually collapsed into only two groups so that a more powerful ANOVA test could be conducted on each group. The overall results, as well as the apology items only, were analyzed for any significant differences.

The scoring method for the discourse-completion tasks follows a marking system commonly used in second language classrooms and was perceived by the researcher to be pedagogically relevant and easily recognizable. The results were compared to data collected from four native Spanish-speakers who had responded to the same situations. Although there were only 29 formulaic apology samples elicited (there were many more alternative apology expressions), there were still some apparent commonalities regarding contextual significance when expressing apologies in Spanish. This information as well as that which was derived from the author's previous research on apology use by six other Spanish native speakers (see Table 2, p.14) was used in the present study as a standard from which to measure the students' accuracy with the four apologies (*disculpa, perdón, lo siento* and *con permiso*). The appropriateness of each participant's response was compared to what the native speakers said (in the same or a similar situation) and

then given a score: two marks for an appropriate apology, one mark for a somewhat appropriate apology and zero for no apology given or one that was completely inappropriate for the given context. This exercise was analyzed yet again for the variety and number of apologies elicited. A statistical analysis was conducted within and between the experimental and comparison groups to determine whether there were any significant differences in the scores.

The video-taped role plays were first compared to the written version that was collected by the researcher at the end of each lesson. Since most of the subjects read the role plays verbatim from their written copy, it was decided that a transcription would be redundant. Once again, the apologies from each role play (including those which were not videotaped) were compared to native speaker data and then all appropriately used apologies were counted and the discourse was analyzed for number and variety of apologies. This method of analysis provided both quantitative and qualitative analyses from which to support my conclusions.

## Chapter 3 – Data Analysis

Prior to analyzing the data collected, the primary focus of this study should be reiterated. That is, did the explicit instruction on apologies given by the researcher help the students achieve greater pragmatic competency and if so, did this competence endure until the delayed post-test that was administered a month and a half after the treatment lesson? In this chapter, the findings from the data collection will be presented for each of the instruments, including the background questionnaire and all of the tests and role plays. The overall results of the multiple-choice items will be compared both within and between groups after which the apology items will be analyzed similarly. There will also be a statistical analysis of the total scores on the open-ended discourse completion exercise and finally there will be a descriptive analysis of both the formulaic and alternative apologies found in the discourse completion task as well as in the role plays.

### 3.1 Background Questionnaire

As expected in the winter term of a first-year university Spanish class, the background questionnaire revealed that the majority of participants had only completed one previous semester of Spanish, never or rarely spoke or heard the language outside of the classroom and had spent limited or no time at all in Spanish-speaking countries. Nonetheless, there were four students (one from each class) who had spent substantial periods of time in a native-speaking environment and this might explain why there was a significant, albeit weak correlation between weeks of travel and the results of the pre-test multiple choice apology items ($r = 0.30$, $p = 0.03$). One student from the second

comparison group had spent a total of forty-eight weeks in Latin America since 1999. His longest stay in a Spanish-speaking country was ten months in Argentina six years ago. On the open-ended discourse completion task of the pre-test, this particular student used a variety of apologies in the correct context. For instance, when responding to the situation in which he arrives late to a theatre and needs to find his seat in the dark (see Appendix C), he wrote the following:

1. Permiso, lo siento, disculpa, mis amigos están por allá y necesito ir.
   "Excuse me, I'm sorry, sorry, my friends are over there and I need to go"

In addition to the use of three different apologies, one cannot help but notice how this participant shortened the expression *con permiso* to *permiso*. This type of colloquial abbreviation is common among native speakers and had likely been heard by the subject while living in a Spanish-speaking country. Another student in the first experimental group claimed to speak Spanish frequently with native-speaking co-workers and also reported traveling to Spanish-speaking countries in the last two years, spending five months in Central and South America and three months in Spain. The results of his pre-test discourse completion were also native-like in their accuracy and variety. For instance, he used the correct formulaic expression for each situation except for the one in which he needed to ask for directions. Instead of using a specific apology, this participant wrote the following:

2. ¡Oye, señor! ¿Donde está la estación de tren?
   Hey mister! Where is the train station?

*Oye* instead of *disculpa* or *con permiso* is an alternative expression that is used frequently by native speakers when attempting to get another person's attention. The aforementioned examples suggest a possible relationship between pragmatic proficiency

and L2 immersion. However, these particular students did not show any significant difference in scores from those of their classmates on the post-tests and delayed post-tests. There were also two other students who seemingly disproved any kind of connection between weeks of travel and test results. One of the participants from the first comparison class had recently traveled to five different countries in Latin America over a four month period and another in the second comparison group had spent two to three weeks in each of four Latin American countries over the past eight years. When reviewing their total scores on both the multiple choice section and the open-ended discourse completion and role play tasks, there seemed to be no noticeable difference in their use of apologies when compared to the other participants. As a result of this relatively weak and somewhat contradictory correlation between travel and pragmatic competence, the data collected from all four of these students were still included in the final statistical analysis.

### 3.2 Multiple Choice Items

Since there was a relatively low number of students who completed all three tests (n = 48), the scores from all four classes were eventually collapsed into two groups. However, there were still some significant differences between the four groups and these will be illustrated and described as required. Coincidentally, each of the collapsed groups contain the same number of subjects (comparison, n = 24 / experimental n = 24).

**Table 6**
Comparison Groups
Average total multiple choice scores (max. = 20)

| Group Name | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Delayed Post-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Comparison Group #1 (n=10) | 15.9 | 2.9 | 14.6 | 3.6 | 16.5 | 3.02 |
| Comparison Group #2 (n=14) | 13.9 | 3.2 | 16.2 | 2.1 | 15.5 | 2.2 |

As shown in Table 6, the average total multiple choice scores for the comparison groups did not vary greatly between any of the three tests. However, it is interesting to note that the pre-test scores for the first group were quite strong, then an ANOVA repeated measures test of the first group reveals a significant drop between the pre-test and post-test ($p = 0.01$) followed by a significant increase from the results of the post-test to the delayed post-test ($p = 0.01$). The possible reasons for this somewhat unusual pattern will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Group #2 provided more expected results with an improvement between the pre-test and post-test but then a slightly lower average in the delayed post-test. Nonetheless, the results of a repeated measures ANOVA test revealed no significant difference between the three tests, even after the two groups were collapsed into one comparison group ($n = 24$).

At first glance, the results from the experimental groups appear to differ from the comparison groups, even before collapsing the two smaller groups into one. One can see in Table 7 that the mean scores on the pre-tests were lower than in the comparison groups but then the results of the post-test show an increase in both classes. A significant improvement by the first experimental group was found between the total multiple choice scores of their pre-test and delayed post-test ($p = 0.00$). Despite the significance of these results, the experimental groups showed more predictable scores in the delayed post-test

in which there was little change made by Group #1 and a slight decline by Group #2. As revealed through a repeated measures ANOVA test conducted on the combined experimental group (n = 24), there was a significant difference between the total multiple choice results between the pre-test and post-test (t = 2.80, p = 0.01) and between the pre-test and delayed post-test was (t = 4.00, p = 0.00). However, there was no significant difference between the post-test and the delayed post-test.

**Table 7**
Experimental Groups
Average total multiple choice scores (max. = 20)

| Group Name | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Delayed Post-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Experimental Group #1 (n=14) | 14.0 | 3.9 | 15.2 | 2.6 | 15.5 | 3.6 |
| Experimental Group #2 (n=10) | 12.6 | 3.4 | 14.7 | 5.2 | 13.7 | 4.0 |

When the four classes were collapsed into one comparison group and one experimental group, the average scores of the comparison group are noticeably higher on all three tests (see Figure 1). However, since only half of the multiple choice items were focused specifically on Spanish apologies, this could simply indicate an increased level of general linguistic knowledge by the comparison group.

**Figure 1**
Average multiple choice scores for both groups (max. = 20)

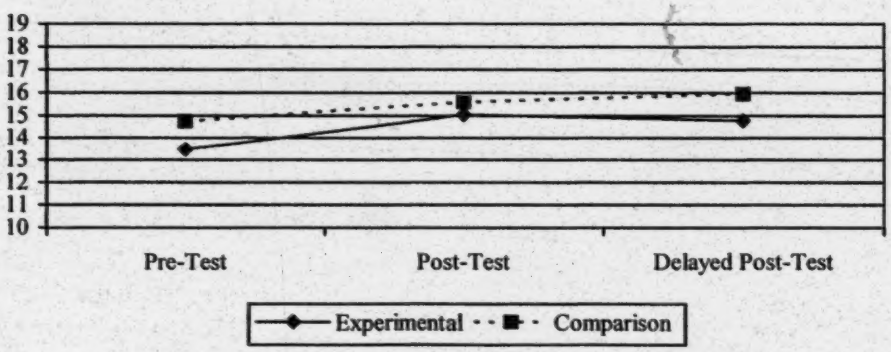


**Table 8**
Comparison Groups
Average multiple choice scores on apology items only (max. = 10)

| Group Name | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Delayed Post-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Comparison Group #1 (n=10) | 7.0 | 2.0 | 6.8 | 2.2 | 7.2 | 2.3 |
| Comparison Group #2 (n=14) | 6.3 | 2.0 | 7.5 | 1.7 | 7.1 | 1.7 |

Upon analyzing the total scores on the multiple choice apology items only (see Table 8), it appears that the first comparison group achieved comparable results to the scores achieved in the overall multiple choice test. This is probably not surprising since the items concerning apologies comprised exactly half of the total multiple choice items. In keeping with the unexpected pattern previously described in Table 6, the average scores on their pre-test was relatively high (7.0) but then dropped slightly on the post-test (6.8) and then up again on the delayed post-test (7.2). The resulting pattern from comparison group #2 is also quite similar to the data from their total multiple choice scores. The results on their post-test (7.5) were quite a bit higher than the pre-test (6.3) but then there was a small dip again on the delayed post-test (7.1). Once again, the results of a repeated measures ANOVA test revealed no significant difference, even when the two classes were collapsed into one group.

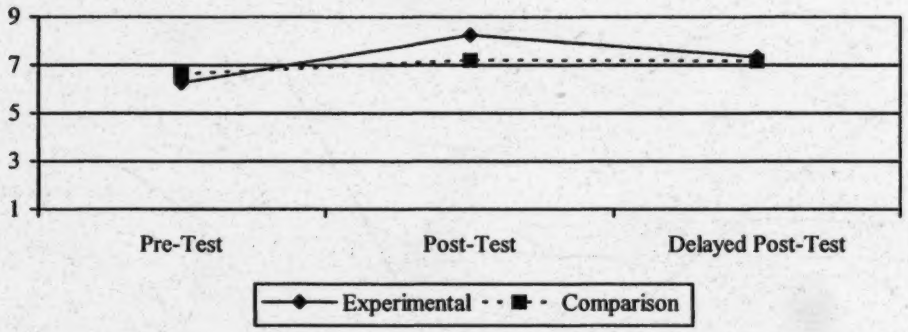
**Table 9**
Experimental Groups
Average multiple choice scores on apology items only (max. = 10)

| Group Name | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Delayed Post-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Experimental Group #1 (n=14) | 6.3 | 2.4 | 8.9 | 0.9 | 7.7 | 1.8 |
| Experimental Group #2 (n=10) | 6.1 | 2.3 | 7.3 | 2.6 | 6.7 | 1.8 |

As seen in Table 9, both experimental groups achieved a similar average on their pre-test (6.3, 6.1) after which there was a substantial gain on the post-test scores (8.9, 7.3).

This gain was then followed by a decrease in the average scores of the delayed post-test (7.7, 6.7), although the total was still slightly higher than on the pre-test. When both groups were collapsed into one, a repeated measures ANOVA test revealed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test ($p = 0.00$), the pre-test and delayed post-test ($p = 0.00$) as well as between the post-test and delayed post-test ($p = 0.01$).

**Figure 2**
Average Scores on Apology Items Only (max =10)




After conducting an ANOVA repeated measures test within the comparison and experimental groups, the results of the apology items only between the two collapsed groups were also compared (see Figure 2). The independent samples T-tests did not reveal any significant differences between the two groups. The post-test multiple choice apology items were the only scores to almost reach statistical significance ( $t = 1.84$, $p = .07$). On the other hand, a single factor ANOVA, comparing the groups individually instead of combined, revealed some distinctions between the initial four groups. Although there were no significant differences between any of the groups on the pre-test or delayed post-test (this includes the total multiple choice scores and apology items only), some differences were noted on the post-test apology multiple choice items between Comparison Group #1 and Experimental Group #1 ($t = 3.26$, $p = 0.00$), as well

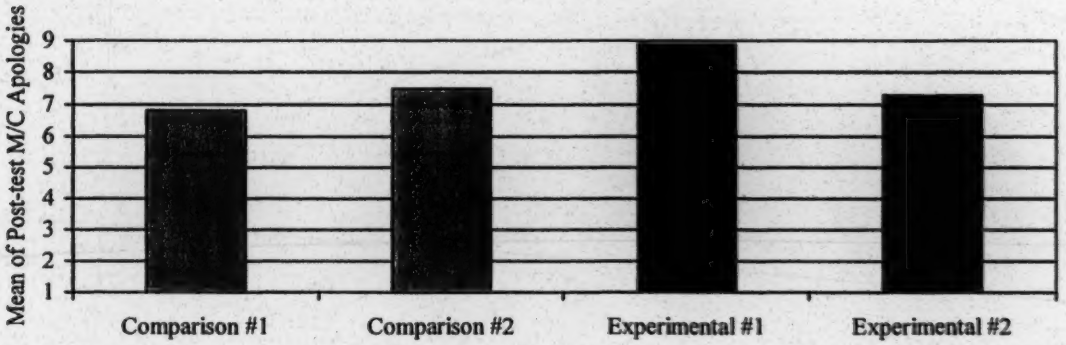
as the Comparison Group #2 and Experimental Group #1 ($t = 2.71$, $p = 0.01$) (see Table 10). There was also a significant difference apparent between the two experimental classes ($t = 2.13$, $p = 0.045$). The possible factors which may have caused this unexpected result between the two experimental classes will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. Nevertheless, it appears that Experimental Group #1 achieved better results on the post-test apology items than the two comparison groups combined.

**Table 10**
Single ANOVA Comparison of Post-Test Multiple Choice Apologies (max. =10)

| C = Comparison Group<br>E = Experimental Group | Mean Difference | T-Value | P - Unadjusted | P - Bonferroni |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C1 and C2 | 0.700 | 0.870 | 0.394 | 1.000 |
| C1 and E1 | 2.129 | 3.265 | **0.004** | **0.021** |
| C1 and E2 | 0.500 | 0.457 | 0.653 | 1.000 |
| C2 and E1 | 1.429 | 2.714 | **0.012** | 0.070 |
| C2 and E2 | 0.200 | 0.223 | 0.826 | 1.000 |
| E1 and E2 | 1.629 | 2.130 | **0.045** | 0.268 |
| C1 and C2 | 0.700 | 0.870 | 0.394 | 1.000 |

The bar graph shown in Figure 3 illustrates more clearly the results of all four groups on the multiple choice apology items on the post-test.

**Figure 3**
Comparison of Post-Test Multiple Choice Apology Items Between Groups



To sum up the overall results of the multiple choice items on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test, there appear to be no significant differences within the comparison group scores. Conversely, statistically significant differences were found within the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test/delayed post-test (total multiple choice scores and apologies only). There were also some significant results noted between Comparison Groups #1 and #2 and Experimental Group #1 on the post-test multiple choice apology items. These results will be discussed in greater depth in the final chapter.

### 3.3 Discourse Completion

In addition to the multiple choice section, the subjects were asked to write, in Spanish, what they would say in five different situations. This exercise was scored out of a maximum ten points and then analyzed for any statistical differences, first between and within the four groups and then later between and within the two combined groups.

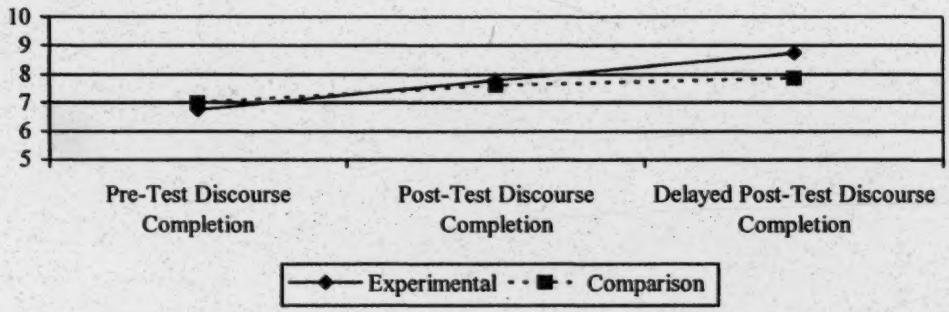
**Table 11**
Average total discourse completion scores (max. = 10)

| Group Name | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | | Delayed Post-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Comparison Group #1 (n=10) | 6.5 | 2.2 | 6.9 | 1.2 | 7.9 | 2.3 |
| Comparison Group #2 (n=14) | 7.3 | 1.9 | 8.1 | 0.7 | 7.8 | 1.8 |
| Experimental Group # 1 (n=14) | 6.2 | 2.9 | 7.1 | 2.5 | 8.5 | 2.1 |
| Experimental Group #2 (n=10) | 7.4 | 1.9 | 8.7 | 1.8 | 9.0 | 1.2 |

The ANOVA analysis of the between-group scores on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test discourse completion resulted in no significant differences (see Table 11). The T-test analysis between the two combined groups revealed similar non-

significant results. There were no significant differences found within the comparison groups either.

**Figure 4**
Discourse Completion Mean Scores (max. = 10)




Upon analyzing within the combined experimental group, there were some significant differences found between the discourse completion scores on all three tests. Between the pre-test and post-test, a paired samples T-test revealed a significant difference ($t = 2.366$, $p = 0.027$) and, using the same test, the post-test and delayed post-test results were also significantly different ($t = 2.752$, $p = 0.011$). As shown in Figure 4, there is a steady increase between the average scores on the discourse completion scores on all three tests within the experimental group ($n = 24$).

### 3.3.1 Discourse Completion Formulaic Apology Variety

Each apology elicited through the discourse completion tasks was counted and categorized as one of the four formulaic expressions (see Tables 12, 13 & 14). The number and variety of apologies used does not necessarily imply correct usage. For example, one student chose to use *con permiso* (excuse me) when expressing her condolences at a funeral. Although this is an inappropriate apology for that particular

context, it was still counted in the analysis because, in this instance, usage accuracy is not a factor to be considered (accuracy had already been noted and analyzed for significance, see Figure 4). Moreover, the attempt by the participants to use a greater variety of apologies may be of pedagogical significance in itself and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The improvement within the results of the experimental groups is especially intriguing when one considers the number and variety of apologies elicited by this group. When comparing the frequency with which the different apologies were used on all three tests, one cannot help but notice from the results of the pre-test that all four groups strongly preferred the use of *lo siento* followed in descending order of usage of *perdón*, *con permiso* and *disculpa* (see Table 12 and Figure 5). However, there is a substantial shift indicated by Experimental Group #1 in the post-test (see Table 13 and Figure 6) in which the use of *lo siento* dropped by 47% and all four formulaic expressions were produced with similar frequency percentages. Even though the second experimental group still seemed to prefer *lo siento* over the other apologies, there was a marked increase in their usage of *disculpa* (+19%). In the post-test, the comparison groups continued to favour *lo siento* (54%, 64%) over all other apologies (see Table 13 and Figure 6).

These differences were less pronounced on the delayed post-tests (see Table 14 and Figure 7) and after combining the four groups into two, the results seemed to indicate a return to the participants' original preference for *lo siento* and *perdón*. However, when compared to the results from the pre-tests, there is still an increase in the appearance of *disculpa* and *con permiso* within the discourse completion tasks of both groups,

especially in the experimental groups (Comparison: *disculpa* +6%, *con permiso* +3%, Experimental: *disculpa* +13%, *con permiso* +10%).

Upon comparing the results of the discourse completion tasks on all three tests (see Figures 5, 6 & 7), it remains apparent that the participants use *lo siento* and *perdón* most frequently overall. We can also see that *disculpa* and *con permiso* are used more frequently by both groups on the immediate and delayed post-test as compared to the pre-test. The implications of implicit learning as well as a generally improved linguistic proficiency among the participants will also be discussed in greater detail in the discussion of results.

**Table 12**
Pre-test Discourse Completion Apology Variety

| Condition | Lo siento | Perdón | Con permiso | Disculpa |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comparison #1 (n = 11) Test A | 28/45 (62%) | 6/45 (13%) | 6/45 (13%) | 5/45 (11%) |
| Comparison #2 (n = 15) Test B | 42/73 (57%) | 21/73 (29%) | 8/73 (11%) | 2/73 (3%) |
| Experimental #1 (n = 16) Test A | 43/60 (72%) | 14/60 (23%) | 2/60 (3%) | 1/60 (2%) |
| Experimental #2 (n = 12) Test B | 32/50 (64%) | 14/50 (28%) | 3/50 (6%) | 1/50 (2%) |

**Table 13**
Post-test Discourse Completion Apology Variety

| Condition | Lo siento | Perdón | Con permiso | Disculpa |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comparison #1 (n = 11) Test B | 28/52 (54%) | 11/52 (21%) | 8/52 15%) | 5/52 (10%) |
| Comparison #2 (n = 15) Test A | 47/73 (64%) | 13/73 (18%) | 6/73 (8%) | 7/73 (10%) |
| Experimental #1 (n = 15) Test B | 20/80 (25%) | 21/80 (26%) | 21/80 (26%) | 18/80 (23%) |
| Experimental #2 (n = 12) Test A | 30/56 (54%) | 10/56 (18%) | 3/56 (5%) | 13/56 (23%) |

**Table 14**
Delayed Post-test Discourse Completion Apology Variety

| Condition | Lo siento | Perdón | Con permiso | Disculpa |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comparison #1 (n = 10) Test A | 27/42 (64%) | 3/42 (7%) | 5/42 (12%) | 7/42 (17%) |
| Comparison #2 (n = 14) Test B | 29/69 (42%) | 22/69 (32%) | 12/69 (17%) | 6/69 (9%) |
| Experimental #1 (n = 14) Test A | 38/69 (55%) | 13/69 (19%) | 7/69 (10%) | 11/69 (16%) |
| Experimental #2 (n = 10) Test B | 20/49 (41%) | 13/49 (27%) | 10/49 (20%) | 6/49 (12%) |

**Figure 5**
Pre-TestDiscourse Completion Apology Variety

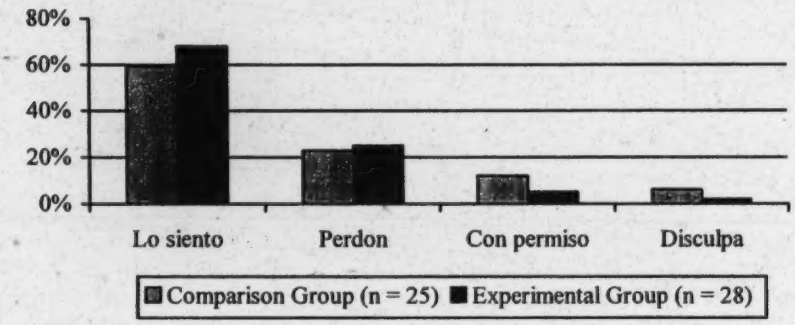



**Figure 6**
Post-Test Discourse Completion Apology Variety

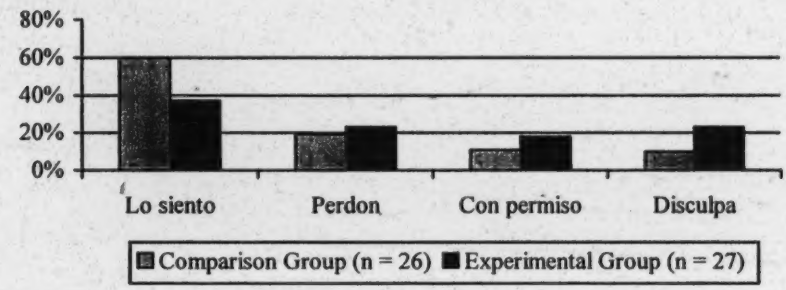
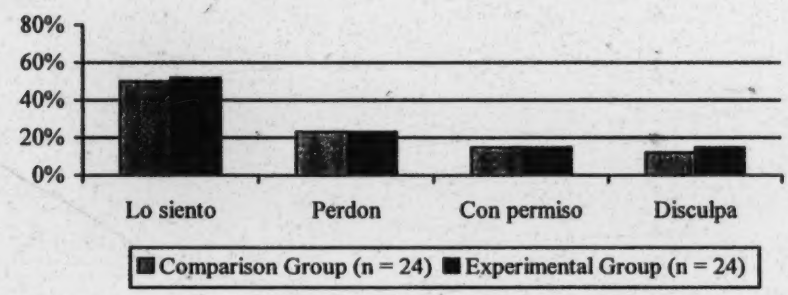



**Figure 7**
Delayed Post-Test Discourse Completion Apology Variety



### 3.3.2 Discourse Completion Alternative Apologies

In addition to finding examples of *lo siento, perdón, disculpa* and *con permiso,* the written responses to each scenario in the discourse completion task were also examined for instances in which the subject attempted to express regret without using any of the previously described formulaic expressions. For the purposes of this particular analysis, only those responses which completely omitted the formulaic apologies were counted. Subsequently, those items which included both formulaic expressions as well as additional expressions of regret will be analyzed and then these results will be compared to native speaker baseline data in the final chapter.

After examining the results of the comparison group's pre-test and considering all the apologies elicited (n = 126), only eight examples of alternative apologies were found (6%). The experimental group used slightly more, with eleven alternative apologies out of one hundred and twenty-one apologies overall (11/121 = 9%). The results from the post-test showed a decrease in the use of alternative expressions by both groups. When responding to the situation about giving condolences at a funeral, one participant from the comparison group used an expression of empathy:

3. estoy triste por tu
   "I'm sad for you"[3]

Example #3 was the only alternative expression found in one hundred and twenty six items from the comparison group (1/126 <1%). The results from the post-test were low for the experimental group as well (3/139 = 2%). The three examples were provided by the same subject in her response to the situation in which she forgot to meet with her

[3] All written samples of student work have been transcribed verbatim (including errors), after which they were translated as literally as possible into English.

classmate for a study session. Instead of using a formulaic apology such as *disculpa* or *lo siento*, this participant expressed her emotion, regret and justification by using the following circumlocutive technique.

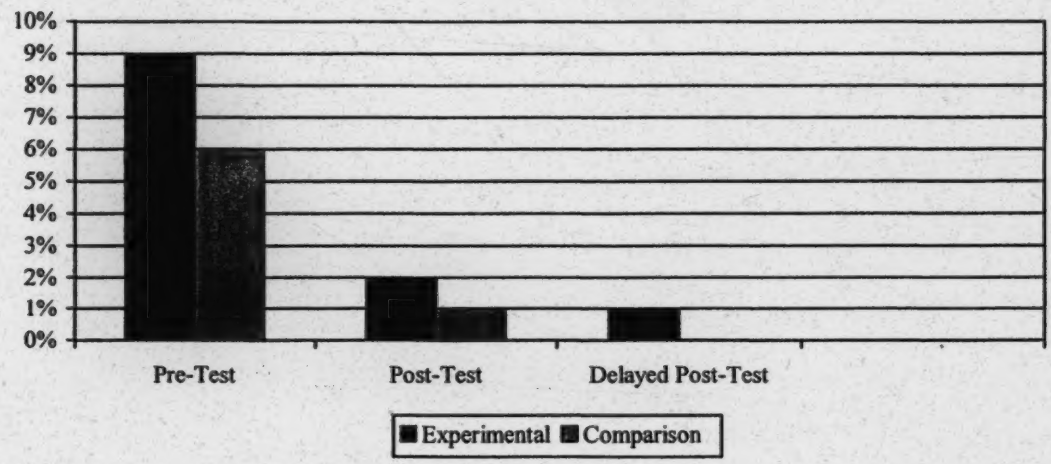
4. ¡Dioz mio! Yo es muy triste. Yo no dormio.
"My god! I am sad. I didn't sleep."

Finally, the results from the delayed post-test among all four classes revealed only two alternative apologetic expressions (2/229, <1%) and these were both written by a student in Experimental Group #1. When responding to the situation in which she arrives to class late, this participant provided an emotive and an excuse by writing the following:

5. Dios Mio Profesora. Yo es perro es muy infermo.
"My god, professor! My dog is sick."

Although there were few examples overall of alternative expressions of regret used by both the comparison groups and the experimental groups, the results seem to indicate a trend by the participants to use this strategy less frequently after the treatment lesson, both in the immediate and delayed post-tests (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8**
Discourse Completion Task Alternative Apology Expressions



### 3.3.3 Discourse Completion Apology Strategies

The results from the discourse completion tasks were also analyzed for any variation in apology strategies employed. For each situation, the seriousness of the offense and the role of the "speaker" were considered. In Test A (see Appendix B), there are two situations in which the offenses were likely perceived to be more serious in nature (running over someone's dog and forgetting your own wedding anniversary) and another one in which the speaker is addressing someone of authority (arriving late to class). In Test B, there is one situation in which the speaker apologizes to her employer for getting drunk at an office party (see Appendix C). The other situations would either be considered minimally serious in nature or ones that do not actually require any saving of *face* by the speaker. For example, expressing condolences at a funeral or apologizing for interrupting somebody are not scenarios which would necessarily incite any kind of personal offense, even though formulaic apologies are still employed.

An initial examination of the number of apologies used for these more serious offenses does not reveal any obvious distinction from those expressed for other situations. Both the comparison and the experimental groups were quite consistent in their use of formulaic apologies for all situations. However, in addition to *saving face*, there seems to be a tendency for the participants to accept more responsibility by attempting to provide some compensation when speaking to their employer, neighbour and spouse. Alternatively, the subjects often made excuses when apologizing for arriving late to Spanish class. Note the different strategies used in Examples #6 - #18 on the following page:

Apologizing to employer:

6. Lo siento señor, pero yo bebí mucho a la fiesta.
"I'm sorry sir but I drank too much at the party."

7. Lo siento. Yo bebí mucho vino o champán anoche.
"I'm sorry. I drank a lot of wine or champagne last night."

8. Disculpa señora. Fui muy tonta anoche.
"I'm sorry ma'am. I was silly last night."

9. Lo siento. No voy a hacerlo una otra vez.
"I'm sorry. I won't do it again."

Apologizing to neighbour:

10. Lo siento señor, mi culpa. Yo te compro una perra nueva.
"I'm sorry sir, my fault. I'll buy you a new dog."

11. ¡Lo siento mucho! Esta es mi falta. ¡Yo compro un nuevo perro!
"I'm so sorry! This is my fault. I'll buy you a new dog."

12. Lo siento. ¿Es tu perro bien? Quiero dar dineros por tu perro.
"I'm sorry. Is your dog okay? I want to give you money for your dog."

Apologizing to spouse:

13. Lo siento! Soy estupido. ¿Puedo hacer tu cenar?
"I'm sorry. I'm stupid. Can I make you dinner?"

14. Mil disculpas. ¡Dios mio! Yo olvidé.
"A thousand apologies. My god! I forgot."

15. Lo siento pero yo te quiero siempre.
"I'm sorry but I love you always."

Apologizing to professor:

16. Lo siento, yo tuve un examen en mi clase pasado.
"I'm sorry, I had an exam in my last class."

17. Lo siento, perdí el autobús.
"I'm sorry, I missed the bus."

18. Perdón, pero yo me levanto tarde. Yo no oigo mi despertador.
"Sorry, but I slept in. I didn't hear my alarm."

The above examples indicate a particular pragmatic strategy described by Meier (1998) in which the seriousness of an offense and the role of the offended seem to affect the speakers' choice to add intensifiers, excuses or offers of redress to the formulaic apology. In the next chapter, this strategy will be further discussed and then compared to previous research on English L1 and Spanish L1 apology strategies.

### 3.4 Role Plays

As explained in the methodology chapter, the role plays were based on a situation in which each participant was required to perform a specific role and converse as naturally as possible with their partner within the guidelines given to them by the researcher. The written versions were analyzed first for number and variety and then compared to the video recordings so as to evaluate any slips or omissions that may have occurred in the oral presentations.

**Table 2**
Role Play Apologies – Written Version

| Condition | Lo siento | Perdón | Disculpa | Permiso |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comparison | 31/40 (78%) | 4/40 (10%) | 4/40 (10%) | 1/40 (2%) |
| Experimental | 16/31 (52%) | 5/31 (16%) | 12/31 (39%) | nil |

When looking at the results in Table 15, the combined comparison groups clearly use *lo siento* in their role plays more frequently (31/40 = 78%). The participants from the two experimental classes used fewer apologies overall (n = 31) but even still, *lo siento* was certainly used much less often by this group (16/31 = 52%) while other apologies

appear to have been used in its place. One also notices the increased frequency with which *disculpa* was used by the experimental group (12/31 = 39%), whereas the comparison group only used this expression ten percent of the time (4/40 = 10%). Three examples of *disculpa*, used by Comparison Group #1, were also seen previously by the participants on their pre-test (Appendix B, #10). It could be that the use of *disculpa* in these instances was merely a repetition of what had already been seen, rather than a novel application of the apology. The only time this expression was used by the first comparison group was when a student playing the part of the host wrote the following:

> 19. Mil disculpa que nadie esta aquí en tu fiesta, pero yo quemé el pastel y mi olvidé de mandar las invitaciones.
>
> "A thousand apologies (I'm so sorry) that nobody is here at your party but I burnt the cake and forgot to send out the invitations."

Two examples of *disculpa* found in the second comparison group were also quite similar to a multiple choice item on their pre-test (see Appendix C, #2). These particular students were playing the role of the guest and apologized to the host for their tardiness. Except for minor grammatical errors, the meaning of each phrase is essentially the same: *disculpe para llegar tarde* and *Disculpe por llegue tarde* "sorry for arriving late".

As seen in Table 15, the experimental group used *disculpa* more in their role plays, and unlike the comparison group there is no obvious connection between any particular item on the pre-test and the phrases used in the role plays. However, there may have been some transfer between the role play discourse and what the students were taught and subsequently practiced during the treatment lesson (see Appendix G). For instance, fourteen role plays were submitted by the participants in the experimental classes. Of these, twelve pairs of students used the phrase *disculpa por llegar tarde* "sorry for arriving late" when the guest apologized to the host. This expression was

taught explicitly during the lesson, once before the video and then again afterwards and was also seen on the pre-test by one of the groups. The phrase was also included on the worksheet as a suitable apology for this scenario. There were, however, three examples from the role plays in the Experimental Group #1 that seem to indicate novel usage of the apologies they had just been taught. Two pairs used *perdón* instead of *disculpa* when apologizing for their late arrival to the birthday party and another pair used *lo siento* in the same situation. Neither of these expressions had been seen in that particular context on the pre-test nor during the lesson.

### 3.5 Summary of Results

This chapter analyzed the results of the data collected by the researcher before and after the treatment lesson. The information gathered in the background questionnaire confirmed that most of the participants had little or no exposure to the Spanish language in a natural environment. However, there were two notable exceptions to this trend among the students and they may have affected the results of the correlation test between weeks of travel and the overall scores of the pre-test. Certainly, the apologies both these students employed on the discourse completion portion of their pre-test were markedly more native-like in quantity and variety. However, there does not appear to be any difference between the overall score achieved by these students on the multiple choice section of the same test.

The average scores from the multiple choice section of the tests show that even though there were few significant differences between the comparison and experimental groups, there were still some aspects to consider within the groups themselves. For

example, the experimental groups' scores improved significantly between their pre-tests and post-tests whereas there was no significant difference within the comparison groups. The scores from the multiple choice apology items also revealed that the combined experimental groups achieved significantly higher results on the post-tests. In contrast, there was a decrease between the mean score of the first comparison group's pre-test and post-test, on the total multiple choice section as well as the apology items only. It should be noted that all groups achieved higher scores on their delayed post-test than they did on the pre-test although the difference was only significant for the experimental groups.

The results of the discourse completion task also showed no differences between groups. However, there was a statistically significant increase in the scores on all three tests taken by the experimental group. The subsequent analysis for number and variety of apologies revealed even more intriguing results. A strong preference for *lo siento* was shown by all four classes on the pre-test but then there was a markedly reduced prevalence of this apology by the experimental groups in the immediate post-test. Then again, *lo siento* appeared once again as the apology of choice on the delayed post-test. Even though this particular formulaic expression appeared to be the default selection for most of the participants, there was still a greater use of other apologies by all classes in the delayed post-test.

When looking at the way in which the participants apologized for the various situations, it appears that different strategies were used depending on the seriousness of the offense. Many participants expressed emotion, accepted responsibility and offered some form of redress after running over their neighbour's dog, forgetting their wedding anniversary and getting drunk at the office party. However, those situations which were

perceived to be less serious in nature (arriving late to class) elicited simple excuses in addition to the predictable formulaic expressions.

Similar to the discourse completion task, the written role plays were analyzed for number and variety of apologies elicited. Once again, the experimental groups used *lo siento* much less frequently than the comparison group. The selection of apologies used in the role plays also suggests the likelihood of both explicit and implicit learning by the students in both the comparison and experimental groups.

## Chapter 4 – Discussion of Results

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis will be summarized and then discussed in detail so as to provide possible explanations for what has already been outlined in the previous chapter. Any limitations in the study and the effect this may have had on the final results will also be examined. Finally, the pedagogical implications for second language education and suggestions for further research in the field of interlanguage pragmatics will be discussed.

### 4.1 Data Results

In general, the results from the data collection suggest that explicit instruction improved both the accuracy and variety of apologies elicited by the experimental groups in the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test discourse completion tasks. There is also a strong possibility that the comparison groups benefited from either one or a combination of two elements found in the research instruments, that is, the implicit information provided through the video dialogue and the naturally present repetition of the testing process. In this section, the results from each component of the study will be discussed in greater detail and the various factors affecting the final results for each group will be considered carefully before approaching any general conclusions.

The information provided by the students on their background questionnaire introduced a rather unpredictable variable over which the researcher had no control. The fact that two students, one from the comparison group and another from the experimental group, had 48 and 32 weeks respectively of immersion experience in Spanish-speaking

countries may have affected the outcome of their tests, especially in the open-ended discourse completion exercise. These two well-traveled students displayed superior results on the pre-test discourse completion task but average overall scores on the multiple choice questions. This may mean that linguistic proficiency is not necessarily a prerequisite to competent use of apologies and also implies that pragmatics can be acquired quite effectively outside of the classroom in an informal setting. Nevertheless, many more samples from students with similar travel experiences would need to be collected before any kind of firm correlation could be established. Regardless of the possible link between immersion experience and pragmatic proficiency, there were no significant differences between the results of these two students and the rest of the participants on the post-test and delayed post-test, statistically nor descriptively. From this we can surmise that perhaps the pre-test and video, although not providing any kind of explicit information on apologies, still offered implicit pragmatic input from which all students were able to improve their understanding and usage.

The results from the multiple choice tests revealed several interesting details that may have affected the overall statistical analysis. For example, on the overall multiple choice pre-test, the first comparison group achieved a substantially higher, although not statistically significant, average than the other comparison group (see Table 4). The reasons for this difference are probably two-fold. For one thing, the first group was smaller (n = 14) which may have allowed them more one-on-one time with their instructor and this could explain their higher proficiency level overall. The final class marks, as provided by the instructor at the end of the semester, revealed high marks (7 A's, 6 B's and 1 C+). It was also an early morning class which is not normally a time

preferred or selected by less motivated students. Their increased motivation was further substantiated by the instructor who claimed that these students often requested and completed extra homework assignments. On the other hand, the second comparison group was a much larger class (n = 29), of which their instructor considered only 9 to be particularly strong and 14 to be of average ability. By and large, the experimental groups were of lower proficiency which could explain their average pre-test scores (see Table 5). Although the instructors were somewhat less specific than those of the comparison groups, the first experimental group was described as a little above average with a few exceptional students and several below average. The instructor of the second experimental group mentioned that her class had some A students, a few B students and several more struggling to get even a C. This discrepancy of general proficiency between participants is normal and the lack of homogeneity among groups may explain the higher mean scores by the comparison groups on the multiple choice sections of the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test (see Figure 4). Nonetheless, when analyzing the results within each of the four groups, the initial strength of the first comparison class did not appear to give them any particular advantage on the post-test and delayed post-test. This may support my theory that explicit instruction on apologies is still better than no instruction at all.

The only significant results discovered in the multiple choice tests were revealed when scoring the apology items on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test. The comparison groups showed no significant differences between their average scores on all three tests but an ANOVA test on the experimental groups' scores revealed a significant increase between the pre-test and post-test scores ($p = 0.00$) followed by a significant

decrease between the post-test and delayed post-test scores ($p = 0.00$). When a single factor ANOVA test was conducted between all four classes, there were some significant differences in the results of the multiple choice apology items on the immediate post-test between both comparison groups and the first experimental group ($p = 0.004$ & $p = 0.012$). There was also a statistically significant difference in results on the post-test between the two experimental groups ($p = 0.045$). Although this result was certainly not anticipated by the researcher, it is not altogether surprising. The first experimental class was held at 11:00 A.M. and the second at 5:00 P.M. Upon reviewing the video taped lesson, the students in the first class were attentive and engaged whereas those from the second class were noticeably tired and distracted during the lesson and several students left early. There also appears to be a difference in general linguistic proficiency between the two experimental groups. Experimental Group #1 achieved higher average scores on the overall multiple choice section as well as the apology items on all three tests (see Tables 6 & 8). However, Experimental Group #2 achieved higher average scores on the discourse completion tasks on all three tests (see Table 10). One can only guess as to why this second group would be less proficient in the multiple choice section and more so in the discourse completion task. Perhaps the instructor of this second group placed more of a classroom focus on writing and less on discrete comprehension tasks which enabled these students to respond more accurately to the various scenarios. Nevertheless, the second experimental group still achieved a slightly higher mean score on the post-test multiple choice items than the first comparison group (see Tables 6 & 7). The higher proficiency level shown by the first comparison group on the pre-test should have given them an advantage in the post-test but this didn't occur, which suggests that the

experimental groups benefited from the explicit instruction on apologies given in their treatment lessons. The difference was not statistically significant however, so this may be a coincidence or it may indicate an imbalance of test difficulty (Comparison Group #1 and Experimental Group #2 wrote different tests). Finally, the results from an independent samples T-test between all three tests of the two collapsed groups (comparison and experimental) did not show a statistically significant difference. However, the p factor on the results between the experimental and comparison groups' post-test apology items was considerably low and worthy of note ($p = 0.07$). The data collected from the three different tests suggest that the explicit instruction provided to the experimental classes increased their overall knowledge of apologies as elicited by the multiple choice items and significantly improved their scores on the immediate post-test (see Figure 3). However, the data does not show a durative effect from the treatment lesson with the results of the delayed post-test indicating both comparison and experimental groups with similar averages on the multiple choice apology scores.

By far, the most interesting results found in this study were discovered in the students' responses to the discourse completion tasks. The initial apologies used correctly in each situation were first tallied and then compared between and within groups. There were no differences found between the comparison and experimental groups but there were some statistically significant results found within the combined experimental group. When the accuracy scores from all three tests were displayed side by side (see Figure 4), one can see clearly that the experimental groups showed steady and significant improvement from the pre-test to the delayed post-test. Conversely, the results from the comparison group remained fairly constant among all of the tests. When

looking at the variety of apologies used by the participants, the results are even more salient. In Figures 6, 7 and 8, we can see that most of the participants from both groups prefer to use *lo siento* in their pre-tests but then, those from the experimental group choose to use other apologies such as *disculpa* and *con permiso* more frequently, although not necessarily accurately, in the post-test (see Figure 6). This would seem to indicate a direct link between the treatment lesson and the students' responses to the discourse completion task. Even though not significant in statistical terms, these results may also present a case for the benefits of implicit learning since many of the comparison group participants chose to use a greater variety of apologies in their post-test as well. Unfortunately, the majority of participants failed to retain their new-found pragmatic knowledge and the results of the delayed post-test were similar to the pre-test scores in that *lo siento* once again appeared as the preferred apology. However, even in the delayed post-test, the experimental groups used *lo siento* less frequently than the comparison groups, which indicates the possibility of minimal retention from the treatment lesson. These findings also show the benefits of explicit instruction on apologies, although lengthier treatments are probably necessary to ensure long-term retention.

In previous research it has been noted that English L1 and L2 speakers tend to follow certain patterns when using apologies (Meier, 1998). That is to say, when addressing a person of authority the speaker uses a greater number of apologies with fewer emotive intensifiers and she also accepts responsibility for more serious offenses rather than justifying her actions with excuses. On the other hand, my own study on a small number of native Spanish speakers appeared to contradict this theory. The

participants used many emotives and also preferred to employ alternative strategies to formulaic apologies, such as justifications and redress for offenses made against persons of authority and those considered more serious by the speaker. When reviewing the data collected from the present study, it appears that the participants followed quite closely the pattern of English L1 speakers. For instance, after running over the neighbour's dog, getting drunk at the office party and forgetting a wedding anniversary the students tended to accept responsibility and tried to offer the interlocutor some sort of compensation for their transgression. This is not entirely surprising since there is quite likely a natural transfer of pragmatic strategies from the students' mother tongue to Spanish. For that reason, when apologizing to their professor for arriving late to class, one would assume that because this is obviously a person of authority, the students would also accept responsibility for their actions. However, this does not occur. For the most part, the students tend to offer excuses for their tardiness. This strategy may be due to the familiarity felt by the students toward their instructor or it could also be a reflection of overall youthful reluctance to acknowledge their role in negative circumstances.

Moreover, unlike the results already collected and analyzed by the author from a baseline study on native speaker apologies (see Table 1), the students in this study used few alternative expressions of regret. It doesn't appear that there is a correlation between linguistic proficiency and the use of alternative apologies. Even though the first comparison class appeared to have a higher level of proficiency overall, the combined comparison group used fewer alternative strategies than the experimental group. Interestingly, both experimental and comparison groups used fewer alternative expressions in the post-test. The reasons for this decrease could be that the students were

now more comfortable using formulaic expressions they had been exposed to during the lesson and in the video and since the apologies were fresh in their minds, they had less of a need to employ pragmatic circumlocution in their post-test. There was also undoubtedly a test effect in place by the time the students wrote their post-test. At this point, most of them had probably come to the logical conclusion that the researcher was looking for specific formulaic apologies. Or perhaps, the students were simply fatigued and pressed for time when writing the post-test and for that reason limited their responses to formulaic expressions which are far more succinct. At this relatively low level of language proficiency, students seem to prefer to use formulaic expressions whenever possible. One would certainly expect a greater level of understanding in order to use alternative expressions effectively and in their appropriate context. It was interesting, however, to see how several students added statements of excuse or redress to their apologies. Not only does this correspond to the results of the baseline study but it would suggest that there are certain socially-constructed rules which appear to supersede linguistic barriers between English and Spanish. Even though the video and the instructor offered certain examples of alternative apologies and intensifiers during the lesson, it was definitely not discussed explicitly which suggests that this pragmatic strategy of supplying additional information in order to express regret may be intuitive for many students. Both experimental and comparison groups probably accessed their English pragmatic schemata after realizing that the focus of the tests and activities was on Spanish apologies and then, during the treatment lesson, the experimental groups would have had more opportunity to focus their attention on what they already knew about pragmatics in both English and Spanish.

One can optimistically surmise that the increased variety of apologies used in the role plays by the experimental group occurred as a direct result of the explicit apology instruction given during the treatment lesson. However, there also appears to be a probable connection between what the students were exposed to on the pre-test and what was covered in the lesson. For instance, some participants from the comparison group used almost exact copies of apologies which had already been seen on the multiple choice section of their pre-test (e.g. *mil disculpas*). This would suggest an implicit learning effect on the comparison group. While the experimental groups included a variety of apologies without any obvious connection to what they had already seen on the pre-test, there may have been a connection between what was covered in the treatment lesson and what they used in their role plays. For instance, almost all of the role play dialogues from the experimental group included *disculpa por llegar tarde* which was an expression explicitly taught by the researcher during the treatment lesson (see Appendix H). These findings further attest to the value of both explicit instruction and implicit input (e.g. reading texts or watching films) in second language education. The question of how and when to employ each method will be addressed later in this chapter

The average results from all four classes on the multiple-choice delayed post-test were higher overall than those from the pre-test and post-test. This is probably not surprising when one considers the amount of time which had passed and the fact that the students were undoubtedly at a higher level of proficiency in all aspects of the language. However, the average scores on the delayed post-test apology items only show an increase by Comparison Group #1 which may indicate some implicit learning in the classroom over the forty-five day lapse or maybe just a better memory (it was the same

test as their pre-test). The average scores by the other three groups were all slightly lower on the delayed post-test apology items. Improved results by both groups on the delayed post-test discourse completion task may also be an indication of overall increased linguistic proficiency caused by the passage of time. This general improvement could also indicate a flaw in the research methodology since the students had already completed this test once before as their pre-test.

When comparing the results from all three tests, it appears that the explicit instruction on apologies provided by the instructor benefited the students in the short-term but that there is also a strong indication of implicit learning through the testing process, video and lesson activities. This may have been beneficial to all four classes and probably enhanced the students' pragmatic competence, especially when responding to the discourse completion tasks. Once again, the benefits of explicit instruction on apologies are fairly clear but there are other implicit factors involved in the teaching process, such as test-effect and input flood, which appeared to have complemented the traditional metalinguistic presentation as provided by the instructor in the treatment lessons.

### 4.2 Research Limitations

Keeping in mind that this was a pedagogically-focused study, there were several aspects of the instruments and data collection which were constrained by the normal confines of a typical classroom situation. First-year students were asked to participate midway through the second semester. The treatment lessons were scheduled to occur one day before a one-week break, which meant that many students were in attendance for the

background questionnaire and pre-test but then were absent the next day for the lesson and post-test. Obviously, the data from these students were incomplete and could not be included in the final analysis of results from their multiple choice items. However, the apologies used in the discourse completion tasks were still analyzed for accuracy and variety and subsequently compared between and within groups.

There was also limited time allowed for an adequate lesson to be conducted while still including the video, role plays and post-test. The explanations needed to be concise yet complete, no small feat for even an experienced teacher. Furthermore, the lesson needed to be designed in such a way that it made sense to the students within the context of the course syllabus. This is why, with respect to the research goals, many extraneous items needed to be included in both lessons and on the tests. Because of the lower proficiency level of the participants, there were also some problems with the *fiesta* video that was shown twice during the lesson. Many of the students complained that the native speakers who acted out the role play spoke too quickly and this lack of comprehension necessitated lengthier explanations by the researcher. The time used for this could probably have been better used for more practice activities and reinforcement by the instructor. From a research perspective, it would have also been better if every student had been able to perform their role plays in front of the class because it may have increased the likelihood of spontaneous speech acts, rather than simply a verbatim reading of what they had written. Although this interactive activity was pedagogically valuable in that it gave the students a chance to orally practice the new material, none of the recorded dialogues differed from the paper versions that were submitted by each participant. Finally, a few of the students verbally expressed to the researcher that they

felt pressured for time when responding to the situations on the discourse completion section of the post-test. This may have affected the number and variety of apologies elicited and may also have inhibited the addition of alternative expressions to many of the formulaic apologies.

All in all, the treatment lesson was perceived by the observing instructors to be relatively strong and one that engaged the students in a productive manner. It was also designed to be a useful and doable lesson for any level of language instruction. However, there is also no doubt in my mind that it would be far more effective if apologies and other pragmatic speech acts were incorporated naturally into many different lessons so that the students would be exposed to them repeatedly and at various stages of linguistic ability. This level of exposure would likely increase the students' pragmatic competence and confidence without taking too much time out of regular classroom activities and curricular requirements.

### 4.3 Pedagogical Implications & Future Research

Although the above restrictions may have limited the researcher, they are also necessary if one is to provide meaningful conclusions within an educational framework. That is to say, if the researcher was unable to teach the treatment lessons within the normal schedule of a typical university or high school class, then perhaps the results would be irrelevant to a regular classroom teacher dealing with daily time pressures. This would definitely negate the true objectives of this study. It is probably fair to say that most educators are busy and have a difficult time fitting all the curricular goals into their lesson plans, while at the same time trying to provide a fun and meaningful learning

experience for their students. Without question, the same holds true for language instructors who are required to teach their students various aspects of the culture from which the language originates as well as basic communication skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking. *Patterns of social interaction*, as defined in the Alberta K-12 curriculum guidelines (p.9), has recently become yet another component of second language learning which teachers are expected to address and is a concept which clearly includes interlanguage pragmatics such as apologies.

The question of whether or not it is at all possible to make students aware of and proficient in such abstract and culturally-based concepts is addressed by Gass and Selinker (2001, p.248), where the authors list several problems related to the instruction of second language pragmatics.

1. Are there universals of pragmatics and how do these universals affect the acquisition of second language pragmatic knowledge?
2. What are the issues relating to methodology and measurement?
3. What is the role of the native language?
4. Is development of L2 pragmatic knowledge similar to the development of L1 pragmatic knowledge?
5. Is there a natural route of development?
6. What is the role of input? Instruction? Motivation? Attitude?
7. What are the mechanisms that drive development?

The first question concerning universals presents an interesting conundrum for linguists and language instructors alike because if there is such a thing, it would suggest that pragmatics is an unnecessary component of instruction. It might also mean that the role of the learner's native language is essential and that there is a natural development of L2 pragmatic acquisition, similar to that of the L1. In the present study, the data collected from the discourse completion tasks suggest the possibility of L1 transfer of pragmatic strategies to the L2. Gass and Selinker (ibid) propose the question of how and when to

teach pragmatics and more importantly, how to effectively assess it in the classroom setting. They discuss concerns such as target language input as well as learner motivation and attitude and whether or not these factors play any kind of significant role in the development of pragmatic awareness and proficiency. From the results of this study, it would appear that students are able to learn pragmatics, even at a beginner's level, and that they probably benefit most when provided with a combination of explicit and implicit input. Although more time consuming, I suspect that the use of role plays might be the most reliable method of assessment with regards to both formulaic expressions and alternative strategies. This type of activity provides the nearest simulation of naturally occurring speech which is where a researcher would quickly identify native language transference of pragmatic strategies or the occurrence of alternative expressions when formulaic speech acts are momentarily forgotten through nervousness.

The issues as raised by Gass and Selinker (2001) present a real problem to language teachers and more specifically to myself, when choosing the instruments and methodology of data collection for the purposes of this particular investigation. In spite of the ongoing debate on the instructional methodology of pragmatics, its importance and necessary inclusion in second language learning is expressed succinctly by Atkinson (2002), who describes language acquisition as a "social phenomena - as existing and taking place for the performance of action in the (socially-mediated) world." Firth and Wagner (1997) further promote a better understanding of discourse and communication and contend that there should be a "significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use".

Instructional approaches, such as the Content Method and Task-Based Learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2002), encourage contextual learning and potentially allow for more opportunities in which pragmatics can be taught in the classroom. Although these communicative methods are frequently championed by SLA researchers and post-secondary pedagogy programs as the best way of teaching a foreign language, it might also be argued that many second language instructors still abide by a fairly traditional approach. In fact, in my own experience, some teachers, including myself, prefer to use an explicit grammar-translation type of lesson, especially when they perceive the presented topic as particularly difficult or confusing to their students. Even so, it may still be possible to incorporate socio-cultural and pragmatic elements of the language into lessons such as these. For instance, authentic texts can be read and interpreted in which many pragmatic expressions within a written context can be analyzed and explained. Unfortunately, the overall understanding of L2 pragmatics in a grammar-translation classroom will certainly be limited. It seems clear that if there is little or no emphasis on the spoken language it will be quite a challenge to introduce students to the intended meaning of a word or phrase. Other teaching methods, such as the direct approach or the audiolingual method, employ a significant amount of verbal input by the instructor that could very well include various pragmatic expressions, even if they are somewhat repetitive and artificial in nature. As always, the teacher has the ultimate power to include pragmatics in any instructional approach. Even still, one needs to question the potentially stilted and non-contextual situations in which various speech acts might be introduced in the classroom and whether students would ever be able to transfer this knowledge to a real-life experience requiring a certain pragmatic savvy.

It may be that the key to learning pragmatics is to replicate, as closely as possible, a naturalistic environment in which language is learned through contextually significant verbal interactions and regulated by specific socio-cultural norms. Despite the obvious artificial nature of a classroom, many of these factors can be taken into consideration through the use of a culturally-focused curriculum in which films, newspapers, magazines, poetry, music, and significant exposure to the target language are provided to the students. For that reason, "meaningful learning" and "contextual practice" become much more than just two more popular catch phrases in the field of education. Rather, they seem vitally important for the long-term comprehension and retention of certain concepts by language learners. For instance, if a student is exposed to a certain expression of politeness over and over again (first in a film, then in a short story and yet again in a situational role play acted out in class) she will probably be more likely to use that same expression when interacting with a native speaker. In a sense, it would appear that pragmatics might be most efficiently and effectively introduced to students by teaching language forms within a specific context, thereby compelling students to perform meaningful tasks within that language. Furthermore, there should be ample target language present in the classroom through teacher talk and other authentic audio-video and written materials. This will better ensure that students are more frequently exposed to formulaic and other pragmatic expressions which would be encountered in everyday situations according to that particular language culture. The socio-cultural significance of pragmatic competence is described in the following way by Kasper and Rose (2001), "Speakers' and writers' choices are [...] governed by social conventions, which can be flexed to different, contextually varying degrees, but only entirely set aside

at the peril of losing claims to face, insider status or sanity." As such, it would appear that the teacher is ultimately responsible for protecting the student's *face* by transforming the "unnatural" classroom environment from a world of structures and forms into an interactive community of social understanding and subtle sensitivity to the *intended* meaning of target language utterances.

The present study was designed by the researcher with these essential components of language pedagogy in mind. The video-taped role play performed by native speakers was meant to offer the students a near-authentic look at a typical birthday party in the Spanish-speaking culture. Student comprehension and retention was ensured by the treatment lesson by providing continuous use of the target language and frequent examples and explanations of apology expressions seen in the video. Finally, the role plays gave the students the opportunity for meaningful oral and written practice of the concepts they had just learned. In a regular classroom, the students would probably benefit greatly from future activities in which they might read different texts or watch a variety of films and then create and perform longer role plays created on their own. Although the results from the immediate post-tests suggest that explicit instruction improved the experimental groups' use of apologies, there also seems to be an indication that implicit input played a role in improving everyone's pragmatic competence to a certain degree. Even without the detailed explanations given by the instructor, the participants from the comparison groups still increased their understanding of the various expressions and perhaps even the relevance of context to pragmatics. I propose that explicit metalinguistic explanations can be an effective method of teaching pragmatics but that instructors should also augment the presentational process by including ample

target language input of all types: multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank exercises, information gap activities, video and audio materials and role play interaction. Through the various media, students will implicitly "notice" the speech act in question while the teacher brings their already activated metapragmatic awareness to the forefront with detailed explanations and situational practice. This would also be a more comfortable and familiar strategy for many teachers since it combines aspects of a traditional teaching style with innovative communicative and interactive task-based activities.

This branch of research on the acquisition of interlanguage pragmatics is intriguing because it emphasizes the socio-cultural nature of language. Research in this field should continue to be conducted using various languages and a greater variety of pragmatic expressions such as requests, greetings, threats and promises. More conclusive results would probably be derived from a long term study involving several lessons in which students are exposed to one aspect of pragmatics in many different situations and then given ample opportunity to practice it interactively, both in oral and written form. The instruments used for data collection should elicit a more spontaneous response from the participants. For example, discourse completion tasks and role plays would be preferable to closed multiple choice items since students are not simply asked to understand the meaning of a phrase but they need to know the correct context in which it should be used. These tasks also offer more flexibility for the students to add alternative expressions and use circumlocution techniques whenever necessary in order to express themselves more fully. This type of activity is far more natural and more closely matches that of native speaker dialogues. Finally, many participants need to complete numerous tasks in order for the researcher to compile a sufficient amount of data from

which to arrive at a reasonable conclusion. It would also be helpful to have native speakers assist in marking the students' work since many of the formulaic expressions are dialectal in nature and can often be correctly used in more than a single context.

### 4.4 Conclusion

The results from this study indicate that the explicit teaching of Spanish apologies improved the accuracy in their production by native English speakers. There was also evidence to suggest that many of the students in the comparison group learned implicitly through watching the video and perhaps noticing apologies on the pre-test. More importantly however, are the results from the experimental group which show a significant increase in the variety of apologies used by the participants on the discourse completion tasks and role plays. This is crucial when one considers that risk-taking is a strategy instructors often encourage language learners to employ in order to increase their level of proficiency. We can presume that over time and with continued exposure to the different apologies within their own unique contexts, students will retain their pragmatic knowledge and achieve even greater competence when expressing themselves in the language they have chosen to learn.

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## Appendix A - Background Questionnaire

*Please read and fill out the questionnaire below. The information that you provide here will be used only for this study and will be kept confidential. Use the back of the form if you require more space.*

Previous Spanish courses: Please circle those which you have already completed, or in which you are currently enrolled.

| Jr High | High School | University |
|---|---|---|
| Spanish 7 | Spanish 10 | Spanish 111 |
| Spanish 8 | Spanish 20 | Spanish 112 |
| Spanish 9 | Spanish 30 | |

**Other** – please explain *(e.g. Spanish conversation classes, Spanish history/culture courses)*

_____

_____

**2.** Spanish use outside of classroom: please *circle the number* which most closely matches your usual frequency for each activity **(e.g. 1 = never, 5 = always)**

| Activity | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Speak Spanish with family members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Speak Spanish with friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Watch Spanish language television or movies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Spanish was spoken at home when you were a child | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other use of Spanish (please explain below) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

_____

_____

_____

Travel to Spanish-speaking countries: List the countries, when the trips were taken and how long you stayed.

| Country | When | Total Length of Stay |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

## Appendix B – Test A

A. Choose the *most logical* word or phrase to complete each sentence.

1. María y sus compañeras de cuarto _____ bien. Son buenas amigas.

**a) se casan** **b) se llevan** **c) se pelean**

2. Quiero _____ porque no pude comprar suficientes bebidas.

**a) sentirme** **b) disculparme** **c) retirarme**

3. Mi padre se _____ hace un año. Ahora no trabaja.

**a) jubilaste** **b) jubilamos** **c) jubiló**

4. _____ la molestía *(the trouble)* pero tengo que trabajar el día de fiesta.

**a) Con permiso** **b) Disculpen** **c) Lo siento**

5. Marta y yo _____ esta noche. Vamos a ir a una discoteca!

**a) dormimos** **b) trabajamos** **c) tenemos una cita**

6. _____, te presento a mi novio.

**a) Lo siento** **b) Felicidades** **c) Con permiso**

7. Qué bueno que ellos _____ algo tan caro para ella.

**a) compraron** **b) compró** **c) compré**

8. Ay, ¡_____! No sabía *(I didn't know)* que en Mexico se dan un solo beso.

**a) perdón** **b) con permiso** **c) siento**

9. A Juan, le gustó mucho el pastel. El _____ una propina después.

**a) durmió** **b) dejó** **c) bebió**

10. Ay, mamá, ¡_____ pero no puedo visitarte para el día de las madres!

**a) Mil permisos** **b) Mil disculpas** **c) Mil problemas**

11. ¡Qué sorpresa! Todos mis amigos _____ una fiesta para mí!

**a) hiciste** **b) hizo** **c)hicieron**

12. ¡Ay, _____, pero no te puedo dar una propina!

**a) encantado** **b) con permiso** **c) lo siento**

13. Claro, _____ es algo muy difícil para los niños!

**a) el divorcio** **b) el cumpleaños** **c) el matrimonio**

14. ¡_____! No traje ningún regalo porque no tengo dinero.

**a) Encantado** **b) Con permiso** **c) Lo siento**

15. El invitado _____ a la boda un poco tarde.

**a) llegó** **b)llegaste** **c) llegué**

16. _____ por olvidar tu cumpleaños.

**a) Con permiso** **b) Mucho gusto** **c) Lo siento**

17. Los novios _____ en la iglesia el sábado pasado.

**a) se divorciaron** **b) se graduaron** **c) se casaron**

18. _____ por no comprarte un regalo para tu cumpleaños.

**a) Con permiso** **b) Gracias** **c) Lo siento**

19. Carlos _____ con su novia porque ya no la quiere.

**a) rompió** **b)rompieron** **c) rompimos**

20. _____, ¿me puedes dejar pasar? Tengo que contestar el teléfono.

**a) no te preocupes** **b) con permiso** **c) lo siento**

B. Please read the following situations and then, *in Spanish*, write what you would say for each one. Write as much as you feel necessary for each situation.

1. You accidentally run over your neighbour´s dog. What do you say to your neighbour?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. You forgot your wedding anniversary. What do you say to your spouse?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. You ask an elderly gentleman for directions to the nearest train station. What do you say to get his attention?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. You arrive late to Spanish class. What do you say to your instructor?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Your best friend's grandmother just passed away. How do you express your condolences?

_____

_____

_____

## Appendix C – Test B

A. Choose the *most logical* word or phrase to complete each sentence.

1) _____ a Nuria y Ana por primera vez en la boda.

**a) Supimos** **b) Quisimos** **c) Conocimos**

2) Ay, ay, ay Margarita, mil _____ por llegar tarde.

**a) lo siento** **b) disculpas** **c) con permiso**

3) El primer ministro y su esposa _____ a la boda de Celine Dion.

**a) asistimos** **b) asistieron** **c) asistió**

4) ¡_____! No te vi en la calle.

**a) con permiso** **b) encantado** **c) disculpa**

5 Para celebrar la quinceañera de su hija, Juan tendrá una _____ el próximo sábado.

**a) fiesta** **b) comida** **c) fecha**

6) _____, ¡necesito pasar (to get by you) por favor!

**a) con permiso** **b) encantado** **c) lo siento**

7) ¿Qué _____ tu amiga, vino o champaña?

**a) bebiste** **b) bebió** **c) bebieron**

8) _____. Es la primera vez que hago algo tan estúpido.

**a) felicidades** **b) con permiso** **c) lo siento**

9) El pastor Salazar _____ a los novios en santo matrimonio.

**a) brindó** **b) unió** **c) presentó**

10. Yo sé que tuviste un día muy malo. ¡ _____!

**a) disculpa** **b) perdón** **c) lo siento**

11) La celebración de su cumpleaños _____ el comienzo de su vida adulta.

**a) marcó** **b) marcaron** **c) marcaste**

12) _____ María, pero no puedo asistir a tu boda.

**a) disculpa** **b) encantada** **c) con permiso**

13) Marcos y yo tenemos mucho en común. Nos _____ muy bien.

**a) llevamos** **b) dormimos** **c) vamos**

14. No te preocupes. Ahórrate *(save yourself)* _____.

**a) los permisos** **b) los perdónes** **c) las disculpas**

15. Yo no pude ir a la graduación de su hijo porque yo _____ en el hospital.

**a) estuviste** **b) estuve** **c) estuvo**

16) _____. Es triste que ustedes se divorciaran pero es mejor así para todos.

**a) Disculpa** **b) Lo siento** **c) Perdón**

17) El abogado _____ mucha propina para la mesera.

**a) alquiló** **b) vendió** **c) dejó**

18) ¡Ay señora! _____ pero no rompí ese vaso con intención.

**a) con permiso** **b) perdón** **c) qué bueno**

19) Enrique _____ una sorpresa muy buena para su esposa.

**a) preparó** **b) preparaste** **c) preparé**

20) Juana me pidió _____ porque no pudo hacer el pastel a tiempo.

**a) mucho gusto** **b) perdón** **c) permiso**

B. Please read the following situations and then, *in Spanish*, write what you would say for each one. Write as much as you feel necessary for each situation

1. You need to ask the conductor for schedule information in the train station. What do you say to get his attention?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. You drank too much at the office Christmas party. What do you say to your boss?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. You forget to meet with your classmate for a study session. What do you say to him/her?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. You have to leave your best friend's wedding early. What do you say to him/her?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. You arrive late to the theatre. What do you say to people as you find your seat in the dark?

_____

_____

_____

_____

## Appendix D – Comparison Group Lesson Plan

**Introduction (1 minute)**

Buenos días/tardes amigos! ¿Cómo están todos? La semana pasada ustedes estudiaron las fiestas ¿no? Muy bien, hoy vamos a hablar más sobre las fiestas en Latino América y España. ¿Qué hacemos aquí en Canadá para el cumpleaños de un amigo? Aquí hay un ejercicio donde pueden escribir tres cosas que son muy típicas de las fiestas de cumpleaños aquí en Canadá (distribute worksheet to students).

**Pre-Task Activity (4 minutes)**

Students: *on the worksheet they write three things about Canadian birthdays*

Muy bien, vamos a ver que piensan sobre los cumpleaños (write a few of their ideas on the board) ¿ahora qué saben sobre las fiestas en Latino América y España? Por favor, escriban tres ideas en su papel.

Students: *on the worksheet (Part 1) they write three things they think they know about birthdays in Spain or Latin America*

Muy bien, ¿y que piensan de los cumpleaños en España y Latino América (write a few of their ideas on the board)? Ahora vamos a ver un video corto de una fiesta de cumpleaños. Hay 5 personas en el video, dos son de Mexico, uno es de Panamá y dos son de España. Escuchen bien porque los acentos son un poco diferentes. También escuchen el vocabulario que usan durante el dialogo para ver si sus ideas son correctas o no ¡Disfruten!

**Video (7 minutes)**

**Show the video without any further comment until it's over**

**Video Comprehension Exercise 2A #1 – 3 (5 minutes)**

Bueno, ¿les gustó el video? ¿Comprendieron mucho? Ahora, quiero que contesten tres preguntas muy generales del video. Numero uno, ¿cuantos invitados vienen a la fiesta? Si, son cinco. Muy bien. Numero dos, ¿de quién es el cumpleaños? Si, es el cumpleaños de David. Muy bien! Y finalmente, numero tres, ¿qué hacen los invitados? Vamos a usar tres verbos. Si, ellos beben, ellos comen pastel y ellos cantan. Excelente!

Students: *on the worksheet (Part 2) they answer the general comprehension questions when prompted by the instructor*

Ahora vamos a ver el video otra vez pero esta vez, quiero que contestan unas preguntas mas especificas. Primero, revisen las preguntas para que todos comprendan bien.

Students: read through the questions first and then ask any basic comprehension questions they might have before watching the video again

**Video - 7 minutes**

**Show the video without any further comment until it's over**

**Video Comprehension Exercise 2B #1 – 5 (3 minutes)**

Bien. ¿Comprendieron más? ¡Excelente! Vamos a revisar las respuestas de la sección 2B. (go over the correct responses to each question and write them on the board)

**Lesson - 15 minutes**

Muy bien, ahora vamos a revisar el vocabulario de los cumpleaños. (put up transparency with pictures of cake, wine, presents, candles and ask students what the word is for each). Primero, ¿qué es esto? ¿Y esto? (continue by asking what each picture is and writing the word by the picture) Review the pronunciation by asking students to repeat each word. ¿Y qué dijeron los invitados a David? ¿Le dijeron "feliz cumpleaños"? No, en realidad ellos dijeron "felicidades" y esta expresión es muy común para muchas celebraciones, no solamente los cumpleaños. Por ejemplo, si es el aniversario de una pareja ¿qué les dice? ¿Y qué dijo Laura, la española que botó el vaso y llegó tarde?" Saben otras disculpas? (mention the apologies "disculpa" and "lo siento")

Students: *complete the vocab section of their worksheet with the instructor and answer questions as prompted by the instructor. Repeat vocabulary items out loud.*

Y ¿cómo se presentaron los invitados? (discuss the expressions "mucho gusto" and "encantado" as well as the traditional kisses on the cheek). ¿Así se presentan aquí en Canadá también?

Students: *discuss differences in greetings between Canada and Spanish-speaking countries*

Bien, ¿quién oyó algunos ejemplos del pretérito? En tu papel, hay varios ejemplos de los verbos que usaron en el video. Algunos están en el

pretérito y otros en el presente. Quiero que toman un minuto para escribir el pronombre y el infinitivo para cada uno

Students: write the matching infinitive beside each verb on the worksheet

Muy bien. Ahora, vamos a ver si saben bien los verbos! (go over the answer to each one and fill it in on the transparency)

*(Quickly go over the answers to the worksheet).*

Ahora quiero que escriban una conversación similar al diálogo que escucharon en el video pero con respecto a otra situacion. Voy a darles una situación y con otro estudiante, tomen 5 a 10 minutos para escribir un diálogo. Después quiero que algunos actuen sus diálogos delante toda la clase. Usen el vocabulario de su libro, Cap. 9 para ayudarles en su trabajo.

*(distribute one scenario to each pair of students)*

**Post-Task – 20 minutes**

Students: working with a partner and using the outline given to them, students write a dialogue that would be appropriate for that situation.

Researcher: muy bien, y ahora ¿quién quiere actuar su dialogo?

Students: at least 3 pairs should act out their role plays

*(video record the role plays)*

Researcher: Gracias amigos. Ahora, necesito todos sus diálogos.

*(collect all the written dialogues)*

**Post-Test - 10 minutes**

Researcher: Y finalmente la última prueba. Por favor completa esta pequeña prueba.

*(distribute immediate post-test and then collect them when they are completed)*

## Appendix E - Comparison Group Worksheet

**<u>Video:</u> Las fiestas de cumpleaños en Latino América y España**

**1. Antes de ver el video**

**A.** ¿Qué sabes de las fiestas de cumpleaños en Canada? Escribe tres cosas muy típicas.

1._____ 2._____ 3._____

**B.** ¿Qué sabes de las fiestas de cumpleaños en Latino América y España? Escribe tres ideas.

1._____ 2._____ 3._____

*Ahora, mira el video y verifica si tus ideas son correctas o no.*

**2. Después de ver el video**

A. *Teniendo en cuenta la información en el video, contesta las siguientes preguntas.*

1. ¿Cuantos invitados vienen a la fiesta? _____

2. ¿De quién es el cumpleaños? _____

3. ¿Qué hacen los invitados? (escribe tres actividades) _____

*Ahora, mira el video por segunda vez.*

B. Mientras estás mirando el video, contesta las siguientes preguntas.

1. Las muchachas españolas se llaman _____ y _____.

2. Normalmente los mexicanos se besan _____ vez solamente.

3. Laura dijo "lo siento" porque llegó tarde y botó (dropped) un _____ de la mesa.

4. Laura y Nuria perdieron el _____ de David en el autobús.

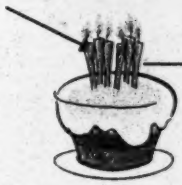
5. En México, se cantan "_____" para las fiestas de cumpleaños.

C. Vocabulario de los cumpleaños

1._____

_____

3._____



_____

D. Verdad o Falso

Circle V (verdad) or F (falso) to each statement

1. Para el cumpleaños de una persona, se puede decir ¡Feliz Cumpleaños! o ¡Felicidades! V F
2. Hay solamente una expresión para disculparse (to apologize) V F
3. En España y Latino América, es muy normal presentarse con un beso V F

E. Los verbos

Beside each conjugated verb below, write the corresponding subject pronoun (careful! There may be more than one option) in the brackets in front and the infinitive in the blank beside it.

1. (  ) pude_____
2. (  ) tuviste _____
3. (  ) estoy_____
4. (  ) vi _____
5. (  ) tuvimos _____
6. (  ) perdiste _____
7. (  ) fue _____
8. (  ) sentimos _____
9. (  ) dije _____
10. (  ) sé _____

**Role play** *¡Qué fiesta tan accidental!*

***Student A:*** ***Host/hostess***

Situation: You are throwing a party for your friend's birthday. Unfortunately, you burn the cake and forget to send out the invitations.

1. Greet your friend and wish him/her a happy birthday.
2. Apologize and explain why nobody else is at the party.
3. Apologize and explain what happened to the cake.
4. Give your friend his/her present.
5. Suggest that you both go out for dinner instead.

**********

***Student B:*** ***Guest***

Situation: You arrive at your friend's house a little late but still expecting a birthday party to be held in your honour.

1. Greet your friend.
2. Apologize for arriving late.
3. Ask where the other guests are.
4. Tell your friend not to worry about the burnt cake.
5. Thank your friend for the gift.

## Appendix F - Fiesta Video Transcription

| Formulaic Apologies | |
|---|---|
| **Disculpa** | **12** |
| **Lo siento** | **6** |
| **Con permiso** | **3** |
| **Perdón** | **4** |

**Characters:**

David - Panamá
Teresa - México
Enrique - México
Laura - Spain
Nuria - Spain

**Setting:** David's house. It is his birthday party

**Start** **00:00**

David: Yo eh en re yo estoy contento de que estén aquí me da mucho gusto y de hecho quiero disculparme porque tuve algo que hacer esta mañana y no pude comprar suficientes bebidas. Quizás tengamos que ir a comprar más.

Teresa: Oye pero tu fiesta es padrisima. Estamos contentos por estar aquí en esta reunión. Tuviste muchos invitados la verdad.

David: Bueno al final de eso son las pa para eso son las fiestas. Para tener un poco de alegría. Claro que te con te dije que mi novia es española.

Teresa: Pero ella no ha llegado y es un poco tarde

David: Bueno si es que tengo que decirte que si los mexicanos son impuntuales los españoles son mucho mas

Teresa: ah recuerdo esta mañana ví a Beatriz en el supermercado. Me dijo que se disculpaba contigo porque no va poder venir

**1:00**

David: mm es una lastima. Bueno (knock on door) ah...

Enrique: deben de ser ellas

David: seguramente

Teresa: espero que si David porque nosotros... nos tenemos que retirar (Enrique opens the door)

David: ahora te las presento

Teresa: está bien

Enrique: bienvenidas

Nuria: hola David felicidades (kisses Enrique)

Laura: Hola

Laura: Nuria, Nuria

Nuria: si?

Laura: el es David (pointing to David) lo siento no lo he presentado pero el es David

Enrique: yo yo soy el invitado de el de David

Nuria: discúlpame ay perdón no sabia discúlpame ah

Laura: um bueno

Nuria: ay esto es muy embarazoso

Teresa: ah no te preocupes a todos nos pasa

Nuria: mucho gusto

Teresa: soy Tere

Nuria: hola cómo estás? (kisses her on both cheeks)

Teresa: muy bien

Nuria: ay en España son tres

Teresa: perdón perdón es es un solo beso en México

Nuria: ah?

Laura: okay yo soy Laura

Enrique: hola Laura

Laura: hola Tere

Teresa: hola cómo está?

Laura: mucho gusto

Teresa: mucho gusto

David: hola que bueno finalmente

Laura: hola David (knocks glass off table)

Teresa: ay cuidado

**1:59**

Laura: lo siento soy muy torpe además de llegar tarde además de llegar tarde David

David: bueno no no te preocupes no te preocupes ahórrate las disculpas

Teresa: ahorita lo limpiamos y

David: eh quieres quieres algo de tomar?

Nuria: si por favor

David: eh ron o ...?

Nuria: si ron mejor gracias

Teresa: pero siéntense por favor

Laura: gracias

Nuria: gracias muchas gracias

David: toma disculpe este este es el ron.

Nuria: ah gracias

David: Tú quieres tequila verdad?

Laura: si gracias. um David lo sentimos tanto. Tuvimos que coger otro autobús y perdimos el trasbordo y entonces es por eso que he llegado tarde.

Nuria: hasta lejos de la ciudad fuimos

Teresa: pero relájate David ya ya están ellas aquí. Y yo creo que es tiempo de darte los regalos.

David: gracias gracias!

Nuria: lo perdiste verdad? En el autobús. Lo siento es mi culpa. De verdad. Espérate voy a xxx el señor del autobús. Voy voy voy

David: no no no no te preocupes. Muchísimas gracias

**3:00**

Laura: David lo siento tanto que lo siento. Es la primera vez que me conoces de así de torpe soy

Teresa: no no te preocupes después se lo puedes dar

David: pues muchas gracias. Quiero decirles gracias por venir. Se que todos han estado ocupados por la mañana con las cosas de la escuela y las clases en la universidad pero gracias por venir.

Nuria: uh si que día es de verdad

Enrique: han sido realmente difíciles estos días. Para mí el eh apenas hoy fue eh mi último día de clases del programa académico. Soy por lo cual estoy muy contento bueno que mejor manera de celebrarlo

Laura: con tu cumpleaños! Verdad?

David: esta mañana yo todavía estaba sacando algunas copias para entregar

Nuria: si tuve el ultimo examen

Enrique: wow Laura que sorpresa

Laura: David felicidades

David: gracias

**3:55**

Nuria: cantemos (Laura and Nuria sing cumpleaños Feliz)

David: en Me en México no se canta esa canción

Laura: como que no?

Teresa: ay no, disculpa es que no sabemos esa canción

Enrique: perdón por no haberles acompañado. Que es muy parecido

Laura: pero que paso?

Enrique: las mañanitas

Teresa: las mañanitas (todos menos Laura cantan "las mañanitas")

David: ya! Ahí se acaba entonces

Enrique: un buen deseo y apagar esas velas

David: bueno que todos sean mas puntuales

Laura: y que cumplas muchos mas David

**4:56**

Teresa: con permiso (phone rings) me podrían dejar pasar? Si gracias

Laura: Si, que paso?

Teresa: el teléfono

Nuria: el teléfono? Donde esta?

Teresa: donde esta?

David: disculpa ah aquí esta, disculpa si dame un momento

David: bueno ah si es si dame un momento (hands the phone to Tere) es para ti

Teresa: para mí?

David: si

Laura: que paso?

Nuria: que paso?

Teresa: (talking on the phone) hola? Okay... si esta bien. Vamos para allá. No nos tardamos. Hasta luego. David discúlpanos mucho tenemos que retirarnos.

David: eh que paso?

Teresa: no es no es nada de que preocuparse. Es solo que mis niños están solos y tenemos que llegar a casa a acompañarlos (phone begins to beep).

David: bueno (picks up phone) disculpa. Xxxx de comprar y no se muy bien como funciona.

Enrique: xxx se ve....bien

Teresa: muchísimas felicidades David. Gracias.

David: no tienen que disculparse. Gracias por venir.

Teresa: con permiso

Enrique: David xxxx felicidades

Laura: (kissing Tere) encantada

Teresa: (kissing Nuria) mucho gusto

Nuria: mucho gusto

Teresa: con permiso. Pásela bien.

**End** **6:05**

## Appendix G - Experimental Group Worksheet

**<u>Video:</u> Las fiestas de cumpleaños en Latino América y España**

**1. Antes de ver el video**

**A.** ¿Qué sabes de las fiestas de cumpleaños en Canadá? Escribe tres cosas muy típicas.

1._____2._____3._____

**B.** ¿Qué sabes de las fiestas de cumpleaños en Latino América y España? Escribe tres ideas.

1._____2._____3._____

*Ahora, mira el video y verifica si tus ideas son correctas o no.*

**2. Después de ver el video**

A. *Teniendo en cuenta la información en el video, contesta las siguientes preguntas.*

1. ¿Cuantos invitados vienen a la fiesta? _____
2. ¿De quién es el cumpleaños? _____
3. ¿Qué hacen los invitados? (escribe tres actividades)

_____

| *Qué se dice cuándo.....* | **en inglés** | **en español** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. llegas tarde a la fiesta: | _____ | _____ |
| 2. olvidas el regalo: | _____ | _____ |
| 3. tienes que pararte de la mesa: | _____ | _____ |

*Ahora, mira el video por segunda vez.*

B. Mientras estás mirando el video, contesta las siguientes preguntas.

1. David dice "Quiero _____me porque no pude comprar suficientes bebidas".

2. Cuando Nuria se confunde y piensa que Enrique es David, ella dice "Ay, _____!"

3. Laura dijo "_____ " porque llegó tarde y botó un vaso de la mesa.

4. Cuando el teléfono suena, Teresa dice " Con _____, ¿me podrían dejar pasar?".

5. Al final, Teresa y Enrique tienen que ir y David dice, "No tienen que _____se. Gracias por venir".

C. Vocabulario de los cumpleaños

1._____

_____

3._____

_____

D. Verdad o Falso

Circle V (verdad) or F (falso) to each statement

1. Para el cumpleaños de una persona, se puede decir ¡Feliz Cumpleaños! o ¡Felicidades! V F

2. Hay solamente una expresión para disculparse (to apologize) V F

3. En España y Latino América, es muy normal presentarse con un beso V F

4. Se dice "mucho gusto" o encantado cuando se presenta V F

5. Cuando haces algo menos serio se puede decir "disculpa" o "perdón" V F

6. Teresa dijo "con permiso" porque dijo algo muy malo V F

7. Si olvidas el regalo es bueno decir "lo siento" V F

8. Disculpa y lo siento son verbos V F

9. Si tienes que salir de la sala para ir al baño, se dice "con permiso" V F

10. No se usa todas las disculpas en las mismas situaciones V F

E. Las disculpas

*Complete the following statements with the appropriate apology (there may be more than one option):*

1. _____ por olvidar tu cumpleaños.

2. _____ por llegar tarde a la clase de español.

3. _____ por confundir los nombres de tus hijos.

4. _____, tengo que contestar el teléfono.

***Role play*** *¡Qué fiesta tan accidental!*

***Student A:*** ***Host/hostess***

Situation: You are throwing a party for your friend's birthday. Unfortunately, you burn the cake and forget to send out the invitations.

1. Greet your friend and wish him/her a happy birthday.
2. Apologize and explain why nobody else is at the party.
3. Apologize and explain what happened to the cake.
4. Give your friend his/her present.
5. Suggest that you both go out for dinner instead.

**********

***Student B:*** ***Guest***

Situation: You arrive at your friend's house a little late but still expecting a birthday party to be held in your honour.

1. Greet your friend.
2. Apologize for arriving late.
3. Ask where the other guests are.
4. Tell your friend not to worry about the burnt cake.
5. Thank your friend for the gift.

## Appendix H - Experimental Group Lesson Plan

**Introduction (1 minute)**

Buenos días/tardes amigos! ¿Cómo están todos? La semana pasada ustedes estudiaron las fiestas ¿no? Muy bien, hoy vamos a hablar más sobre las fiestas en Latino América y España. ¿Qué hacemos aquí en Canadá para el cumpleaños de un amigo? Aquí hay un ejercicio donde pueden escribir tres cosas que son muy típicas de las fiestas de cumpleaños aquí en Canadá (distribute worksheet to students).

**Pre-Task Activity (4 minutes)**

Students: *on the worksheet they write three things about Canadian birthdays*

Muy bien, vamos a ver que piensan sobre los cumpleaños (write a few of their ideas on the board) ¿ahora qué saben sobre las fiestas en Latino América y España? Por favor, escriban tres ideas en su papel.

Students: *on the worksheet (Part 1) they write three things they think they know about birthdays in Spain or Latin America*

Muy bien, ¿y qué piensan de los cumpleaños en España y Latino América (write a few of their ideas on the board)? Ahora vamos a ver un video corto de una fiesta de cumpleaños. Hay 5 personas en el video, dos son de Mexico, uno es de Panamá y dos son de España. Escuchen bien porque los acentos son un poco diferentes. También escuchen el vocabulario que usan durante el dialogo para ver si sus ideas son correctas o no¡ Disfruten!

**Video (7 minutes)**

**Show the video without any further comment until it´s over**

**Video Comprehension Exercise 2A #1 – 3 (5 minutes)**

Bueno, ¿les gustó el video? ¿Comprendieron mucho? Ahora, quiero que contesten tres preguntas muy generales del video. Número uno, ¿cuántos invitados vienen a la fiesta? Sí, son cinco. Muy bien. Número dos, ¿de quién es el cumpleaños? Sí, es el cumpleaños de David. ¡Muy bien! Y finalmente, número tres, ¿qué hacen los invitados? Vamos a usar tres verbos. Si, ellos beben, ellos comen pastel y ellos cantan. ¡Excelente!

Students: *on the worksheet (Part 2) they answer the general comprehension questions when prompted by the instructor*
Ahora vamos a ver el video otra vez pero esta vez, quiero que contesten unas preguntas más específicas. Estas preguntas tienen que ver con las diferentes disculpas que usan en el video. Por ejemplo, ¿qué decimos aquí en Canadá si llegamos tarde a una fiesta? ¿Y si olvidamos el regalo? ¿O si tenemos que pararnos de la mesa y no hay mucho espacio? Muy bien. ¿Y quién sabe qué se dice en español para las mismas situaciones? (write their ideas on the board) Muy bien, ahora vamos a ver el video otra vez y escuchen las diferentes disculpas.

Students: *brainstorm their apology ideas in both English and Spanish on the worksheet and then read through the following comprehension questions. Ask any basic comprehension questions they might have before watching the video again*

**Video - 7 minutes**

**Show the video without any further comment until it's over**

**Video Comprehension Exercise 2B #1 – 5 (3 minutes)**

Bien. ¿Comprendieron más? ¡Excelente! Vamos a revisar las respuestas de la sección 2B. (go over the correct responses to each question and write them on the overhead transparency)

**Lesson - 15 minutes**

Bueno, ¿qué piensan? ¿Comprendieron lo que pasó? Muy bien. Para empezar, cuales palabras usaron con respecto al vocabulario de fiestas? (pointing at the four different pictures on the transparency ask students to identify each one) ¿Qué es esto? Sí, es un pastel. ¿Y esto? Sí, son los regalos. ¿Y esto? Sí, es el vino. Y finalmente, ¿estas? Sí, son velas.

Ahora vamos a ver si las siguientes frases son verdaderas o falsas. Tomen unos minutos para hacer esta sección y después lo revisamos juntos.

Students: answer the Verdad / Falso section on their own first (or with a partner)

**Número uno** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) ¿Qué piensan ustedes? ¿Qué dicen los invitados a David? *(discuss how "felicidades" is often said instead of "feliz cumpleanos" and how it's equivalent "congratulations" would probably not be used in the same situation in English)* Si, es verdad. Excelente!

**Número dos** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) ¿Qué dijo Laura, la española que botó el vaso y llegó tarde?" Mira como Teresa usó "disculpa" cuando dijo a David que Beatriz no pudo ir a su fiesta. ¿Y qué dijo Teresa cuándo se paró de la mesa para contestar el teléfono? Entonces, ¿qué piensan? ¿Hay solamente una manera para disculparse? No, hay más. ¿Cuáles son? (write their ideas on the board). ¡Muy bien!

**Número tres** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) ¿Como se presentaron los invitados en el video?*(discuss the expressions "mucho gusto" and "encantado" as well as the traditional kisses on the cheek)* Entonces, es verdad. Es normal presentarse con un beso.

**Número cuatro** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) Ya hablamos de estos costumbres. Si, es verdad que se dice estas expresiones cuando se presenta.

En Número 2 aprendimos que hay varias expresiones para disculparse en español. Ahora en número cinco, seis y siete vamos a ver si hay alguna diferencia entre las diferentes disculpas. Primero, ¿qué piensan ustedes? ¿Piensan que todas las disculpas son sinónimas? No, seguramente que no. También hay que tener cuidado porque en algunas regiones se usan unas más que otras. Sin embargo, hay algunas generalizaciones que te pueden ayudar. Por ejemplo, qué dijo Nuria cuando se confundió entre Enrique y David? *(wait for a response)*

Ella dijo "discúlpame" y "perdón". Y fue algo muy serio, ¿esta confusión? No, realmente nadie fue muy ofendido.

Al contrario, ¿que dijo Laura cuando botó el vaso de la mesa y tambíen cuando dijo que había perdido el regalo en el autobus? *(wait for a student to respond and if not tell them)* Si, ella dijo "lo siento". ¿Y qué piensan ustedes de estas dos situaciones? ¿Son más serias que confundir el nombre de una persona? Si yo creo que si.

*(If necessary, explain these different situations in English for better comprehension of the context in which the apologies were uttered)*

¿Y qué dijo Teresa cuando quería levantarse de la mesa y responder al teléfono? ¿"Disculpa" o "lo siento"? *(wait for a response before explaining)* No, ella dijo "con permiso". Entonces, ¿qué piensan de estas diferentes expresiones? ¿Y cuándo se dice perdón? Son muchas pero no se dice en las mismas situaciones. *(write all of the apologies on the board)* Ahora vamos a revisar las respuestas.

Students: *answer "verdad" or "falso" out loud as the researcher reads out each statement*

**Número cinco** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*). ¿Verdad o falso? Si, es verdad. Parece que "disculpa" o "perdón " es un poco más común para las cosas que no son tan serias. También se dice como "excuse me" cuando haces un erupto o algo así. (use body language to show a burp)

**Número seis** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) ¿Verdad o falso? No, es falso. Ella no dijo nada malo. Simplemente tenía que contestar el teléfono. "Con permiso" es muy diferente porque se usa casi siempre para indicar algún movimiento. Por ejemplo, si tienes que salir de la clase para ir al baño o algo así.

**Número siete** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) ¿Verdad o falso? Si es verdad porque "lo siento" es un poco más fuerte con más sentimiento. Ven como "lo siento" viene de la misma raíz que sentimiento. Eso es el verbo "sentir". ¿Qué significa este verbo? (*wait for a response*). Muy bien, entonces la disculpa tiene el mismo sentido un poco más profundo. Disculpa viene de un verbo también. ¿Saben qué es? (wait for a response) Si, es disculpar. Saben la expresión " no es mi culpa" (explain in English if necessary). Ven como esta expresión es diferente ¿no? Es difícil traducir estas expresiones porque el sentido cambia un poco dependiente al contexto. Sin embargo si uno piensa en las raíces de disculpa y lo siento, se entiende un poco mejor.

**Número ocho** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) Ya sabemos que esto es verdad. Muy bien!

**Número nueve** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) ¿Qué aprendimos en el número 6? Si, es verdad porque uno tiene que decir "con permiso" para indicar algún movimiento físico.

**Número diez** (*read out the statement on the worksheet*) ¿Verdad o falso? Verdad!! Ya sabemos que la expresión "I'm sorry" tiene varias traducciones en español. Hay diferentes disculpas para cada situación. Por ejemplo, se pueden traducir así:

**Write the following explanations on the board (students fill in the blanks on their worksheet)**

Lo siento por olvidar tu cumpleaños.
Disculpa por llegar tarde a la clase de español
Perdón por confundir los nombres de tus hijos
Con permiso, tengo que contestar el teléfono

Ahora quiero que escriban una conversación similar al diálogo que escucharon en el video pero con respecto a otra situacion. Voy a darles una situación y con otro estudiante, tomen 5 a 10 minutos para escribir un diálogo. Después quiero que algunos actuen sus diálogos delante toda la clase. Usen el vocabulario del video para ayudarles en su trabajo.

*(distribute one scenario to each pair of students)*

**Post-task – 20 minutes**

Students: *working with a partner, students write a 10 (approx.) line dialogue that would be appropriate for the situation.*

Researcher: muy bien, y ahora ¿quién quiere actuar su dialogo?

Students: *at least 3 pairs should act out their role plays which will be video recorded*

Researcher: Gracias amigos. Ahora, necesito todos sus diálogos. (collect all the written dialogues).

**Post-Test - 10 minutes**

Researcher: Y finalmente la última prueba. Por favor completa esta pequeña prueba. (distribute immediate post-test and then collect them when they are completed).